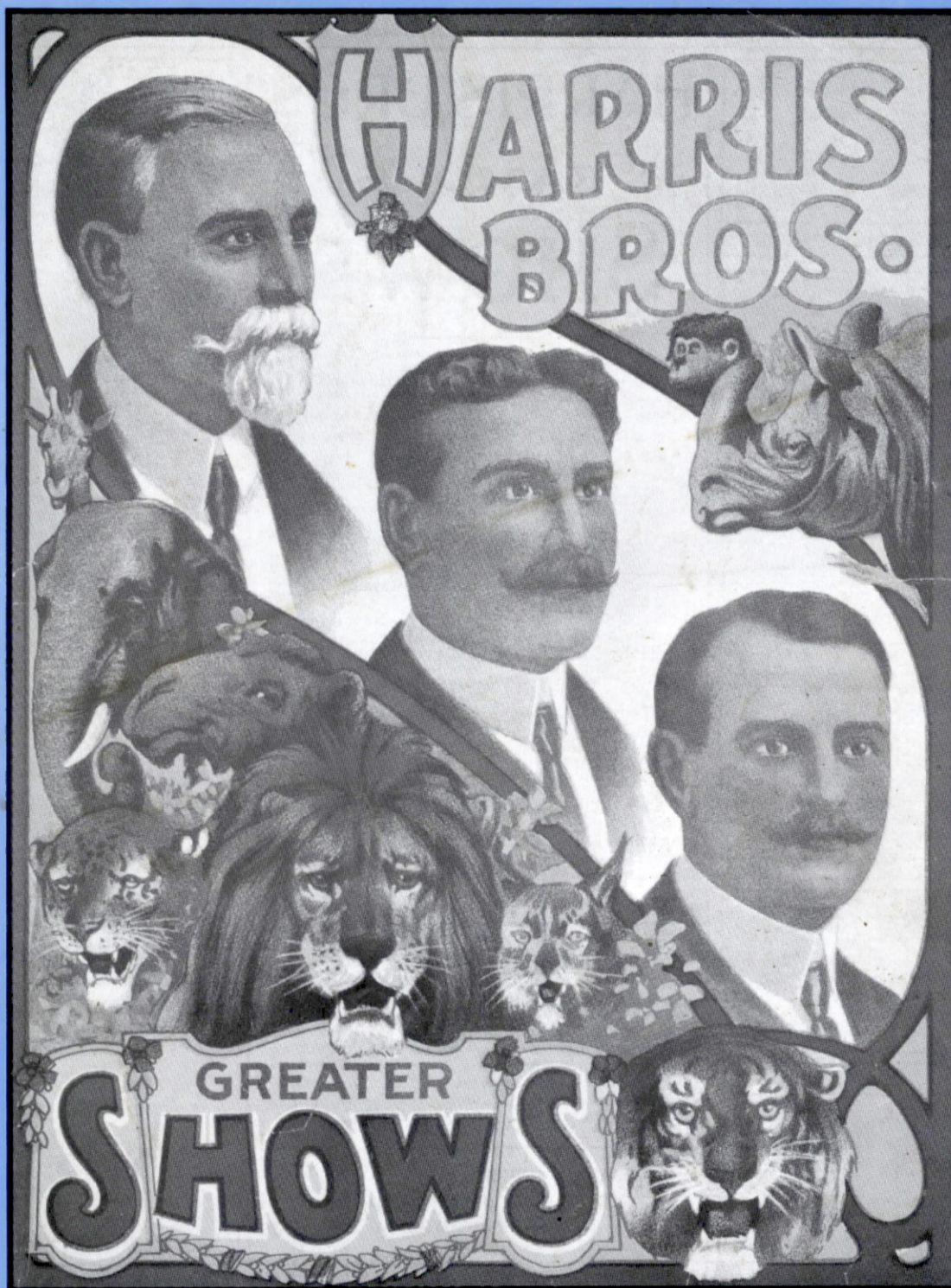


CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

COLE BROS 1937

**B
A
N
D
W
A
G
O
N**



MAY-JUNE 1966



Vol. 10, No. 3

May-June 1966

Fred D. Pfening, Jr., Editor

Joseph T. Bradbury, Associate Editor

Fred D. Pfening, III, Associate Editor

Publication, Advertising and Circulation office located at 2515 Dorset Road, Columbus, Ohio 43221. Advertising rates: Full page \$30.00; half page \$18.50; quarter page \$10.00. Minimum ad \$5.00.

Annual subscription fees for the Bandwagon are \$5.00 and are due each May 1. Subscriptions received during the year will be charged the following: Those received in May-June, \$5.00; July-August, \$4.24; September-October, \$3.40; November-December, \$2.55; January-February, \$1.70 and March-April, 85c. Single copies 85c.

CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC., Robert Parkinson, President, Route 2, Box 309, Baraboo, Wisc. 53913; Gaylord Hartman, Vice President, 1056 Jefferson Ave., Washington, Penna. 15301; Julian Jimenez, Treasurer, 1325 Commercial St., Atchison, Kan. 66002; John W. Boyle, Secretary, 3844 Euclid Ave., Cleveland, Ohio 44115.

DIRECTORS, DIV. 1—Richard E. Conover, 927 Oakland Dr., Xenia, Ohio 45385 (Mich., Ohio, Ind.); **DIV. 2**—Paul R. Horsman, Jr., Fryeburg, Me. 04474 (Maine, Vt., N.H., Mass., R.I., Conn., Del.); **DIV. 3**—James Hassan, 6036 Webster St., West Philadelphia, Penna. 19143 (N.J., N.Y., Penna., Va., Md., Wash. D.C., W.Va., Ky.); **DIV. 4**—Freddie Daw, 245 Catalonia Ave., Coral Gables, Fla. 33134 (N.C., S.C., Ga., Ala., Fla., Miss., Tenn., Ark., La.); **DIV. 5**—Orlo J. Rahn, 405 S. Lincoln Ave., Davenport, Iowa 52804 (Wisc., Ill., Minn., Iowa, Mo.); **DIV. 6**—Ned E. Atchison, 217 E. Walnut, Columbus, Kan. 66725 (N.D., S.D., Nebr., Kan., Okla., Tex.); **DIV. 7**—Glenn R. Draper, 727 Albion, Burley, Ida. 83318 (Mont., Ida., Wyo., Colo., N.M., Utah, Nev., Ariz.); **DIV. 8**—Charles W. (Chang) Reynolds, 1706 Wagner St., Pasadena, Calif. 91106 (Wash., Ore., Calif.); **DIV. 9**—Edward W. Cripps, 159 Morrell St., Brantford, Ont., Canada (Canada).

THIS MONTH'S COVER

In 1924 Floyd and Howard King used the Harris Bros. title on their baggage car circus. As outlined in the Tom Parkinson article in this issue, the Kings used titles available from lithograph firms, but the Harris title was their own creation.

The Harris title was used only in 1924, and did not appear again until 1938, when Ray Marsh Brydon used it on his truck show.

The original is printed in full color and is very striking. Pfening Collection.

Freddie Daw's All-Circus Catalog, 3-hole punched for adding new pages when printed. Subscribers will receive 3-Ring Letters when published and all new pages FREE OF CHARGE. Send only \$2.00 to the address below for your subscription. Great for 1/4 scale model builders.

Freddie Daw Circus Hobby Hall

245 Catalonia Avenue
Coral Gables, Fla. 33134

ATTENTION MEMBERS AND SUBSCRIBERS

In April you received a green envelope—notice that the 1966 membership dues and subscription fees were payable.

If you have not forwarded the \$5 payment in this return self-addressed envelope this is the last issue of the BANDWAGON you will receive. The July-August issue will not be sent to those who are not paid in full.

In order not to miss a single issue you are urged to forward payment to the Treasurer at once, if you have not already done so.

NEW MEMBERS

- No. 1517 E. H. Clute
1408 Strongs Avenue
Stevens Point, Wisc.
- No. 1518 George M. Atwood
2204 39th Street
Lubbock, Texas 79412
- No. 1519 Jack Willett
1619 Fillmore St.
Davenport, Iowa 52804
- No. 1520 William J. Uthmeier
Box 549, 904 Columbus Ave.
Marshfield, Wisc.

- No. 1521 Herbert G. Bullivant
53 Richard Terrace
Middletown P.O.
Red Bank, New Jersey 07701
- No. 1522 James Heaton
1013 Webster Avenue
Bay City, Mich.
- No. 1523 Harper Joy
825 West 21 Avenue
Spokane, Wash.
- No. 1524 Chet M. Slusser
428 E. Oak Ave.
Porterville, Calif.
- No. 1525 Wes Herwig
P.O. Box 15
Randolph Center, Vt. 05061
- No. 1526 Clarence Fuller
112 E. State St.
Salem, Ohio
- No. 1527 C. Beerntsen
2061 Blake Ave.
Racine, Wisc. 53404
- No. 1528 Richard L. Kantor
1216 Main St.
Hellertown, Penna. 18055
- No. 1529 John Heckman
R.D. 5, Box 300
Chambersburg, Penna.
- No. 1530 Armand A. Brodeur, Sr.
35 Flagler Ave.
Cheshire Ave, Conn.
- No. 1531 Jack Morris
1804 N.W. 30th
Oklahoma City, Okla.
- No. 1532 R. Curtis Harris
9 Franklin St.
Homer, N.Y. 13077
- No. 1533 Clifford J. Provo
207 W. School St.
Villa Park, Illinois
- No. 1534 Joseph J. Dougherty
1627 White Hall Street
Allentown, Penna. 18102
- No. 1535 Edward J. Stransky
907 Ninth Street
Waukegan, Illinois
- No. 1536 Albert Schlink
Amherst Road
Bedford, N.H.
- No. 1537 Richard A. Bennett
P.O. Box 503
Elgin, Illinois 60120
- No. 1538 Ralph F. Skidmore
1512 Evelyn Avenue
San Angelo, Texas
- No. 1539 Charles E. Owen
348 Beechwood Road
Berwyn, Penna. 19312
- No. 1540 Ernest R. Smith
1364 Lexington Avenue
Apt. 2 N
New York, N.Y. 10028
- No. 1541 Edward Krumbach
927 North 17th Street
Hollywood, Florida

REINSTATED

- No. 1010 Major John J. Rowe
4693 E. Livingston Ave.
Columbus, Ohio 43227
- No. 23 Gordon M. Potter
3717 Washington Ave.
St. Joseph, Mich. 49085

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

I am happy to announce the appointment of Miss Virginia Holman of Indianapolis as Chairwoman of a Shut-in Correspondence Committee. This committee has particular significance because it is the first endeavor involving the CFA and CHS in common effort. It is announced jointly with Mr. Edwin Mehmert, President of the CFA, who has worked enthusiastically with your CHS President to make this united effort a reality.

Miss Holman has already done much in the area of mail for shut-ins, on her own initiative. Her experience qualifies her to direct her own program. As chairwoman of a joint CFA-CHS committee, however, she may now draw upon the membership of both clubs to expand her project.

To the shut-in mail delivery is indeed as exciting as a circus street parade. Without it, a day is empty and morale drags. It is well that our societies now recognize this responsibility to our sick members and friends.

Miss Holman needs help. She needs an army of letter writers. She needs names and addresses of shut in fans and troupers. Will you volunteer your services? Write Miss Virginia Holman, 2145 Shelby Street, Indianapolis, Indiana.

One word of caution. This project is not designed for everyone who sneezes. Logistics prohibits its effectiveness to the routine ill. It is geared to sustain a flow of mail to those who are shut in for prolonged periods. This is a mile-stone of joint CFA-CHS endeavor. Let's make it work!

This is the last issue of Bandwagon before our convention. I wish to urge every member to come to Baraboo and enjoy the events planned. Please note the special notices in the last Bandwagon relative to lodging, transportation and banquet reservations. These are important to avoid last minute mix-ups.

There has been some comment about the low registration fee announced in the last Bandwagon. With the conventions of all three fan clubs plus the Milwaukee events scheduled within two weeks, the planners for the CHS convention recognize a possible resultant pocketbook strain. We are therefore holding our registration fee to a minimum. The gingerbread and regalia normally associated with conventions will be modest with most attention directed to the more important circus, business and social activities. We hope large numbers of people will fully avail themselves of all opportunities commencing with Cincinnati, including Milwaukee, and through Baraboo. We'll see you in July!

HAVE YOU MOVED

If you have changed your address be sure to advise the Bandwagon office of your new address. The Post Office will not forward third class mail, and your copy comes back with a minimum of 8c postage due. It then takes another 8c, or more to forward it on to you. In addition to this extra bother and cost to the CHS you are delayed in receiving your copy.

Please let us have your new address in advance of your move.

PHOTOS SWITCHED

Photos '7 and 8 of the Forepaugh-Sells 1910-1911 article that appeared in the March-April, 1966, issue of the Bandwagon were switched.

The photo of the Five Graces bandwagon should have been on page 6 and the Lion bandwagon should have been on page 7, as outlined in the cutlines.

- (a) Route of the 1841 Olympic Circus owned by the Mabie Bros. & Seth Howes \$2.00
- (b) Life of George Morrison plus La Pearl's Route of 1892 \$1.00
- (c) Mabie Circus Route of 1863, day by day diary, expenses both in and out, mileage daily, very complete history and quite rare \$2.00

SPRING SPECIAL

- All of the above (a, b, c) plus
- 12 old circus pics, our choice
- 9 old circus routes, our choice
- 9 Issues of BANNER LINE, World's Only Twice A Month Circus Publication
- 8 old circus tickets, our choice
- 2 old circus litho contracts, our choice

Entire Spring Special \$5

VAN MATRE

3328 "H" St.,
Phila., Pa., 19134

AVAILABLE BACK ISSUES OF BANDWAGON MAGAZINE

- 1961 March-April
Sept.-Oct.-Nov.
December
- 1962 March-April
May-June
July-August
September-October
November-December
- 1963 January-February
March-April
May-June
July-August
September-October
November-December
- 1964 January-February
March-April
May-June
July-August
September-October
November-December
- 1965 January-February
March-April
May-June
July-August
September-October
November-December

Above issues 85c each
Please Add 75c Postage
Circus Historical Society
2515 Dorset Rd., Columbus, Ohio 43221

TATTOOING

Two revealing books — by a tattooed girl. "How To Do Good Tattooing" with 30 full page pictures. "The Story of a Tattooed Girl" with 135 pictures, both including many of the authoress. These books show exclusive pictures of the world's most beautiful tattooed girls, never previously published.

Price each, \$5 surface, \$7 airmail.

Catalogue of Tattoo Supplies Equipment.

Photos, \$1 airmail.

Reply, Miss Cindy Ray, P.O. Box 34,
Ivanhoe, Victoria, Australia.

TATTOOING

"How To Do Good Tattooing"
"The Story of a Tattooed Girl"

Circusdom's Historic Personage

By Tom Parkinson

Occasionally, history comes to focus on one man who has seen a great span of events or has been at the scene for more than one share of significant happenings in his field.

Such a man is Floyd King.

Sometimes successful, sometimes not; sometimes a major character in the cast of circus history, sometimes not, Floyd King has seen an amazing phantasmagoria of circus seasons run their course.

He has watched the switch from mud shows to indoor shows. He has been owner and agent for two-car circuses, flat car railroad outfits and motorized operas. He has been with them all, indoor and outdoor, joints and phones, large and small.

When he was 18 he wrote a booklet of rules for showmen and signed it "by Floyd King, the old circus man." Somehow that typifies his whole career in one anecdote. It was 47 years ago that he first owned a circus of his own; 1959 was his 50th season of circusdom, and this is his 58th.

King was a contemporary of Charles and John Ringling, Charles Sparks, Jerry Mugivan, George Christy, Al G. Barnes, Walter L. Main, the Gentrys, Jess Adkins, Zack Terrell, Ben Davenport, Clyde Beatty, Lucio Cristiani, Art Concello, and a fantastic array of additional circus celebrities.

Years alone hand him that sort of a record, but he has experienced in those seasons what few other men can claim.

He became an owner in the boom period following World War I and saw the great days of the circus in the 1920's, when Ringling created so many stars and the Corporation trouped so many shows.

He saw the two-car era come to a close, and he thrived with the small rail outfits of the twenties.

King and his brother, Howard, made unhappy history in the Depression when all of the independent railroad shows killed off, leaving only Ringling units in operation. Their shows were among the casualties.

King had been press agent ahead of the Hagenbeck-Wallace circus in 1918, that year of its devastating railroad wreck. He was back with Hagenbeck-Wallace's press department part of 1934, when Manager Jess Adkins used that classic circus edition to show them all how it ought to be done.

That assignment put King on deck for the inauguration of Cole Bros. Circus in 1935, historic both as one of the last big railroad shows to be framed from scratch and as the first post-Depression challenge to Ringling-Barnum.

The 1938 season, catastrophic for circus business, found Floyd King in the

thick of it when he secretly routed the Cole show home in August and then handled Robbins Bros. Circus for the balance of the season.

There was more circus history to be made in 1955, when he had what undoubtedly was the largest truck circus ever. Next came another catastrophic season in 1956. This found King in a sensational and skillful effort to keep a circus afloat without money. His was the second important show to close that season. Clyde Beatty Circus had closed earlier. King then joined Ringling-Barnum, the first time in his long career that he had been on the Ringling show itself, although he had been with some of its subsidiaries earlier. This connection lasted only briefly, and it was Ringling's fault; that show collapsed at Pittsburgh while King was in Chicago as part of its advance.

He was yet to make more circus history in 1956. Late in the season new management of the Clyde Beatty Circus brought King on as agent. Thus, he was with the final flat car railroad circus in history.

He had used the Cole Bros. title in 1929-30 and induced Adkins and Terrell to use it in 1935. Then he and Arnold Maley bought the Cole name in 1954, and used it as King Bros. & Cole Bros. Circus. In 1959 he was instrumental in the Cole title being acquired by the Clyde Beatty Circus and combined with that name.

Floyd King probably originated the name "Under the Marquee" for *The Billboard's* news column. He has owned famous wagons, famous elephants and famous titles. He has routed two shows at a time on occasions in the Twenties, Thirties and Sixties, and early in the latter decade he routed three shows at a time.

He underwent surgery for ulcers in 1949 and subsisted on milk and crackers for the most part during the next several years, a feat not easy while trouping a circus to one-day stands. That's when he was traveling with his family Southern style; his wife, Vicki, was assisted in caring for the children by a huge Negro mammy.

Stomach trouble was followed by eye trouble. He was afflicted by cataracts in both eyes but underwent successful operations on each eye about a year apart. He was active in his show management throughout that period, although for a while he was nearly blind.

A Southern boy, King always has been partial to Coca Cola. Before World War I with Hagenbeck-Wallace, and during World War II with Polack Brothers, he was renowned far and wide for carrying two suitcases — one with clothes and one



Floyd King, circusdom's historic personage, now in his 58th year in the circus business.

with his own supply of Coke. When the ulcers came along, hotels in his small towns rarely had available refrigeration. So he bought a daily supply of milk for his diet, put the six quarts in the hotel room tub and filled the latter with ice and water. His room always included a heavy stack of letters, his typewriter, a supply of newspaper mats and his tub full of milk bottles, or Coke.

King always has been a short sleeper, usually getting four or five hours rest at night. In rail show days this was an attribute because there was little time for the owner to sleep anyway. And in phone show days it's still an advantage. Now he uses those extra night hours for endless telephoning to and from agents all around the country.

King has been over the routes so many times and with such a keen eye that for years he has done much of his general agenting from a distance. When he has owned the show, he has dispatched and directed contracting agents from a hotel phone after the night performance. As

HAGENBECK-WALLACE CIRCUS

DIRECTION OF ED. BALLARD

| | | |
|----------------|---|---------------|
| 1,000 PEOPLE | BIGGEST ZOO ON EARTH | 50 CLOWNS |
| 3 R. R. TRAINS | GIANT OF TENTED INSTITUTIONS | 80 MUSICIANS |
| 400 ARTISTS | EARTH'S MOST AMAZING ACTS | 60 RIDERS |
| 500 HORSES | \$3,000,000 INVESTED - DAILY EXPENSE \$7,500 | 60 AERIALISTS |

PARADE AT 10 A. M. PERFORMANCES BEGIN AT 2 AND 7 P. M.
ONE TICKET ADMITS TO ALL — 1917

general agent for other shows he has operated from regional hotels—typically Philadelphia, Chicago, Dallas, New Orleans and his home town of Macon. His contractors rarely find him short of up-to-date information on every town. When they have difficulty and abandon efforts to book one, he has all the information at his fingertips to start them on a substitute site nearby.

King was born at Hickman, Kentucky, in 1888, the son of a Methodist minister who was assigned to a different community each four years, slow trouping. One of the stops was at Memphis, and from there young Floyd went to Trinity College, which today is Duke University. The young student blew the Halls of Ivy for the Call of the Calliope at the end of the 1908-09 school term. He left Liberal Arts to practice the fine art of the candy butcher. This was with Cherokee Ed's Wild West Show, a 10-car horse opera that came from William P. Hall's second hand circus shop to play along the new Virginian Railroad's tracks in Appalachian coal country. The education was rapid. He hadn't had a payday before the Cherokee show bit the dust. By steamboat and train he returned to Memphis and became a reporter for the *News-Scimitar*. King's partiality for the newspapers and railroads continues to this day. With Cherokee Ed, he had noticed the press agent seemed to have little work to do; that's what led him to the newspaper business. But idleness is not in the King cards. Furthermore, the Wild West Show had introduced him to the intriguing columns of *The Billboard* and there he found an ad saying Al G. Barnes Circus needed a press agent. King sent his Memphis bylines to Venice winter quarters and was hired out by general agent Harold Bushea. The energetic new press agent made points with the big city newspapers when he discovered they preferred glossy photographs to the usual circus mats. King supplied what they wanted and was rewarded with better than average space for his publicity.

He took a breather as agent for a hall show called "White Sister" and as reporter for the *Montgomery, Alabama, News*. But R. M. Harvey, famous agent for all the big shows, had spotted King's work with Barnes and contracted him for Hagenbeck-Wallace, where he stayed for 1913 through 1918. He was seldom idle. During circus winter layoffs King trouped hall shows and laid up more bank account.

Combination of Barnum and Ringling in 1919 meant that many of their employees were looking for new work prior to that season. One of these was Ringling fixer Bill Godfrey, who met King at Chicago and told him of plans to join with Dode Fisk in buying High Grass Bill Campbell's two-car show. Floyd moved fast. His own connection with Hagenbeck-Wallace was uncertain since that outfit was being sold to Mugivan and Bowers. He went to Enid, Okla., and it was he who bought the Campbell Bros. Circus—all two tents, two horses and two cars of it.

His brother, Howard, joined him at once. Floyd had urged Howard to leave merchandising to join circuses a few years before and had steered him into money jobs. Howard had the John Robinson uptown wagon one season, the reserved seat wagon another, and he was with a show in which R. M. Harvey had an interest—probably Coop & Lent—still another year. Now as partners Howard served as manager and Floyd always was ahead as agent.

High Grass took his title and the Kings' money to start a minstrel show and later to frame the Campbell, Bailey & Hutchinson Circus. This meant that the brothers needed a name for their opera. The Donaldson Lithograph Company had on the shelf a supply of posters for Sanger's Great European Shows left over from

1912, when Mugivan last used the title in that form. So the Kings' circus became Sanger's Great European for as long as the paper lasted.

Frank Orman was superintendent, among other things, on the 1919 Sanger show, and thus began a long association with the Kings. They were together on Cole in the Thirties, King Bros. in the Fifties and Clyde Beatty in the Sixties.

Sanger hired a band but the leader took it to Helena, Ark., instead of Helena, Okla., for the opening, so the Kings hired a town band and most of the people stayed all season. The show moved to Kansas and after some time it reached Hutchinson on a Sunday. Floyd came back to the show there and said to Howard, "Get your grip. Let's go. We can't make it."

But Howard took him to the hotel room and counted out a thousand dollars to convince him that things were going better than they seemed. The Kings did stay in business. At Bonners Ferry, Idaho, on July 4, 1919, they gave three shows. Howard King found the town banker in the audience and induced him to go to town, open the bank on the holiday and issue a cashier's check. This he sent to High Grass Campbell to complete payment for the circus. The next day they entered Canada to compete with other two-car shows in the territory. The Sanger name, of British origins, did well for them in Western Canada, where they got \$1 per admission for four weeks. Later in the season, Sanger Circus had opposition in Mississippi with the Elmer Jones two-car show and with John Robinson.

Their 1920 season started at Memphis with a week for the Shrine. That August they bought their first elephant, Little Hipp, which had been in vaudeville, and it cost nearly as much as the whole show had cost the year before. Then in March, 1921, that first bull died. News reached Floyd while he was in California for a court case dating back to his time with Al G. Barnes. While helping there, King learned that the Barnes show was seeking

In 1909 this 10 car wild west show had a short life, but long enough for Floyd King to join out as a first of may. The title is red and the rest is green. Pfening Collection.

Cherokee Ed's
Wild West
And TRAINED WILD ANIMAL
SHOWS COMBINED.
 AN IDEAL EXHIBITION
 Presenting some of the BEST Stars and
 Features known to the amusement world.

a new feature. He told them of the huge elephant he had seen down South on the M. L. Clark wagon show. Later Barnes bought that bull and named it Tusko.

Meanwhile, the Kings bought an elephant for 1921 from Mugivan. During the season it was staked beside the cars one night in Ohio and glutted itself on spoiled apples piled nearby. Over night in the baggage car it swelled so much that it could hardly get out of the door the next day at Ashland, O. Then, having walked to the lot, it died. That was 1921, a year the show had a good spring, made Eastern Canada but didn't do so well coming out of there.

It was about this time that the King show infiltrated the Erie Railroad. Some nefarious showman had neglected to pay the Erie for moving a show train, so now that line had an embargo against all circuses. But two-car shows rarely painted their rolling stock and King's were not identifiable as show plunder. Therefore, he could buy the passenger tickets that qualified him to move special cars in passenger service, and the Erie was none the wiser about what cargo he carried. Somehow none of the Erie brass tumbled

(Season of 1921.)

The Year's Best Holiday

PRINCETON Thursday, 21
APRIL



GREAT SANGER SHOW

25th ANNUAL TOUR OF AMERICA'S FOREMOST TENTED ORGANIZATION

Never before such a galaxy of Acrobats, Riders, Equilibrists, Contortionists, Gymnasts and Aerialists

SPECIAL R. R. TRAIN 20-CLOWNS-20

AN ARMY OF PEOPLE A CITY OF CANVAS
POSITIVELY THE ONLY BIG SHOW COMING THIS SEASON

NEVER DIVIDES—NEVER DISAPPOINTS
FREE EXHIBITIONS on Show Grounds at 1:00 and 7:00 P. M.
Performances 2:00 and 8:00 P. M.
Doors Open One Hour Earlier
Excursion Rates on all R. R. for the Big Holiday


YEAR'S BEST HOLIDAY

ONLY BIG SHOW COMING

COVINGTON MONDAY 6TH

NOVEMBER ONE DAY ONLY

MENA A \$100,000 investment. Largest elephant alive; 10ft. 9in. high; 21n. taller than Jumbo



M.L. CLARK AND SONS COMBINED SHOWS

25th ANNUAL TOUR OF AMERICA'S FOREMOST TENTED ORGANIZATION

Never before such a galaxy of Acrobats, Riders, Equilibrists, Contortionists, Gymnasts and Aerialists

SPECIAL R. R. TRAIN 20-CLOWNS-20

AN ARMY OF PEOPLE A CITY OF CANVAS
POSITIVELY THE ONLY BIG SHOW COMING THIS SEASON

NEVER DIVIDES—NEVER DISAPPOINTS
FREE EXHIBITIONS on Show Grounds at 1:00 and 7:00 P. M.
Performances 2:00 and 8:00 P. M.
Doors Open One Hour Earlier
Excursion Rates on all R. R. for the Big Holiday

to the fact that there were circus posters in all their towns. As the only railroad circus making the line, the King outfit did big business.

Late in 1921 the Sanger paper was gone so this became Hugo Bros. Circus. Printers had that paper left over from the unprofitable attempts of Victor Hugo, a former Barnum & Bailey magician, in the operation of his show. King felt a special closeness to this title since he had trouped one winter as agent for Hugo's magic show playing theaters.

It was in this period that general agent King traded on the name of the famous and popular Gentry Bros. Dog & Pony Show. In contracting for lots King explained that he was an agent for Gentry Bros. Circus. After the lot owner accepted the deal he added that really he had a second unit of Gentry called Hugo and that since it was smaller it was therefore unable to pay as much for the lot. On other occasions he talked a poor mouth, saying he and his brother had leased the show from Gentry and that they were having a rough time of it, thus deserving lower prices for the lot.

Eagerness for animals prompted the

Kings to seek out old illiterate M. L. Clark, Southern mud show operator, with a deal for 1922. Clark brought on the elephant Mena as well as a camel, two lions, ponies and a puma and 20 monkeys for which he was paid \$5,000 as percentage on the season's gross.

The Sparks Circus had been refitted with all new steel railroad cars in 1921, so the Kings could acquire the 80-foot tunnel car which had transported Sparks' cages in earlier seasons. About the same time they acquired a former Barnum and Bailey advertising car. Their consist was up to four cars for 1922, with the Clark menagerie.

Again Floyd King beat down a challenge. There was a railroad strike in 1922. He kept the show moving while other shows were laid off on side tracks. Despite the strike, an engine picked up the King cars each evening at 6 p.m. Even though the jumps were short and the show was light, it wasn't easy, but they gave a show each night. They then laid over until 6 p.m. the next night. This went on until they got off of that line and onto the Pennsylvania Railroad, where they were not affected and moves were normal again.

They had opposition with Campbell, Bailey & Hutchinson much of the season in 1922, and especially in North Carolina. The Kings made 52 stands in that state. But Campbell, Bailey & Hutchinson cov-

1923 YEARS' BEST HOLIDAY

STAMPS, Monday NOV. 12th

ONE DAY ONLY



THE GREAT RICE BROS. SHOWS

ORGANIZED BY DAN RICE IN 1853

\$200,000 CAPITAL INVESTED—SPECIAL R.R. TRAIN

20 — CLOWNS — 20
20 — ACROBATS — 20
20 — AERIALISTS — 20
200 — PEOPLE — 200

TOM TOM Oldest and largest elephant in the world. Your grandfather fed him peanuts.

2-BANDS—2-A CITY OF TENTS
Performances 2 and 8 p.m.—Doors Open 1 and 7 p.m.

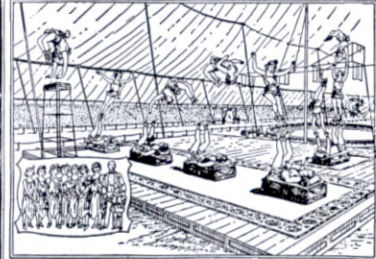
ered paper and there was great opposition. Floyd was game for the fight. He stayed on his route and billed the little outfit as if it were a big show.

He was back on his circus at the last opposition town, and both he and Howard went out to the fair grounds to see their cause of trouble—Campbell, Bailey & Hutchinson. They found the show; it had folded right there. Thus it was that the man who sold them the two-car show later gave them much trouble but lost out himself in the opposition.

There are conflicting reports about the number of cars for 1924 but it probably was five cars by that time. In any case for that season it was called Harris Bros. Circus. King recalls today that the Rice title of 1923 was probably the best of any he and his brother ever used. With it they had cleaned the shelves of all the poster printers in the country. So they made up the Harris title on their own. This was the last of their baggage car shows. They used tunnel cars that permitted carrying more wagons than was common with such tricks.

In these seasons the King shows had not infrequent clashes with the citizenry. At Attala, Alabama, there was a clem that started when a local gang marched against the circus. Troupers mobilized and charged against them. One townier was downed with a tent stake. A switch engine brought the cars to the lot and the show was loaded under a rain of rocks. In the meantime, the mayor had called Floyd King to the city hall where it was necessary for the owner to talk the authorities out of holding the show. Again,

GENTRY BROS.
BIG 4 RING
CIRCUS



\$750,000. CAPITAL INVESTED. 2 SPECIAL R.R. TRAINS

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 500—PEOPLE—500 | NOW ENLARGED TWICE IN SIZE. NO WHERE ELSE CAN SO MUCH BE SEEN FOR SO LITTLE. IN 40 YEARS IT HAS GROWN TO BE THE WONDER CIRCUS. |
| 400—ANIMALS—400 | |
| 5—BANDS—5 | |
| 5,000—SEATS—5,000 | |
| 30—AERIALISTS—30 | |
| 60—ACROBATS—60 | |
| 60—RIDERS—60 | |
| 2 GREAT HERDS OF ELEPHANTS | |

GALA, GOLDEN STREET PARADE AT 11 A. M.
DOORS OPEN AT 1 & 7 P. M. PERFORMANCES 2 & 8 P. M.

YAZOO CITY 30

Tickets on sale at Carr's Drug Store Show Day Only

in Elkhorn City, Kentucky, coal miners took exception with the King show's plan to give a John Robinson to a turn-away house. The lot fight broke out, and by coincidence the town firebell went off simultaneously to compound the confusion. Troupers cut out their lights and this broke the rout, whereupon all of the local toughs went to see the fire.

The last half of the 1920's was a reputation making time for the young King brothers. It was in this period that they operated two circuses, generally under the Walter L. Main and Gentry Bros. titles.

Their baggage car shows had racked up good money, and they had attracted attention of other showmen by 1924. It was in that season that John Pluto tried to sell them the Golden Bros. circus, and the brothers very nearly took it.

Instead they closed Harris Bros. into Louisville quarters, and Floyd King went to Peru to buy equipment for a flat car show. Jerry Mugivan was slow on taking up the purchase offers, and the reason became apparent soon. He offered Floyd a job as general agent for Sells-Floto Circus. When King turned it down on the grounds he could make more money as owner than on a salary, Mugivan warmed to the sale idea and supplied King with two baggage cars, about 20 baggage horses, a John Robinson calliope, a pole wagon, stringer wagon and possibly other baggage rigs, plus four wooden flats that had been replaced on the Robinson show by steel equipment.

There appears to be some confusion as to whether it was before or after the 1925

season that Floyd purchased an additional tableau from Charles Sparks and got there also four wooden hubbed wheels on which the Kings built a generator wagon. Similarly, there is contradictory information as to whether it was before or after the 1925 season that King contacted Charlie Ringling at Sarasota and purchased cages out of Baraboo and tableaux out of Bridgeport.

Their first venture with a circus in freight service was the 10-car Walter L. Main Circus of 1925. It did well in the northeast where the title was known and came home in November with \$60,000. When it arrived in Louisville quarters, employees looked out with amazement, for there on the side track was the Gentry 15-car show. Floyd had left his own show early to take out a hall show and in that period John Pluto had contacted him again. Together they bought the Gentry show from a bank that had taken it away from James Patterson. The newly acquired circus was waiting in quarters when the first unit arrived home.

During that winter Pluto decided to sell out and Buster Cronin was ready to buy his share. The Kings objected to a partnership with Cronin then, so they bought up the Pluto interest. With their \$40,000 Gentry show, they also had acquired the services of Jess Adkins, a man Floyd later would work for.

During the winter they transposed

THE GREAT COLE BROS. SHOWS
WORLD-TOURED



\$750,000 CAPITAL INVESTED 2-SPECIAL R.R. TRAINS-2
THE MOST AMAZING CIRCUS OF ALL TIMES!

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 500—PEOPLE—500 | WORLD'S WONDER TRAVELING ZOO TIGERS LLAMAS BEARS TAPIRS LIONS OUDADS WART HOGS PECCARIES LEOPARDS GNUS VLAACK VARKS HEDGE HOGS PANTHERS DEER HARTBEESTS JAGUARS BOKS NYLGHAS ZEBUES MANDRILLS |
| 400—ANIMALS—400 | |
| 5—BANDS—5 | |
| 5,000—SEATS—5,000 | |
| 30—AERIALISTS—30 | |
| 60—ACROBATS—60 | |
| 60—RIDERS—60 | |
| 2 GREAT HERDS OF ELEPHANTS | |

GALA, GOLDEN STREET PARADE AT 11 A. M.
DOORS OPEN 1 & 7 P. M. PERFORMANCES 2 & 8 P. M.

UVALDE, TEXAS, (Opening Stand, 1930.)
SATURDAY MARCH 29

(Season of 1927.)
ELBERTON, GA
One Day Only
FRIDAY NOV. 11
WALTER L. MAIN
3 BIG RING CIRCUS



ORGANIZED IN 1879
POSITIVELY THE ONLY BIG CIRCUS COMING

A SHOW OF SUPREMELY STUPENDOUS SURPRISES
A PEEERLESS PROGRAM OF PRE-EMINENT PERFORMERS
Everything New, Novel, Costly and Concocting An Hottest Show Conducted on Up-to-date Lines
Earth's Most Marvellous Amusement Extravaganza The Best Stars of the Circus Firmament.
FREE TO ALL—ONE MILE OF MAGNIFICENT PARADE AT 11 A.M.
Performances 2 and 8 P.M. Doors open 1 and 7 P.M.

titles, with the Gentry name going to the 10-car show and the Main title being painted on the 15 cars. Floyd King was agent ahead of both units. The Gentry outfit, with Adkins as manager, had a poor season, but the Main show, under Howard King's management, came in with substantial profit. By the 1926 season, if not before, the Kings were using several cages and tableaux purchased from Ringling. In addition, Mr. and Mrs. Howard purchased a private car from John Ringling.

The 1927 season was not good for either show. The shows closed into new quarters at the army's inactive Camp Knox, Ky. During the winter Howard King uncovered some 12 barrels of olive drab paint which the Army had abandoned. The exterior of the shows carried the yellow paint that was to become traditional with King circuses, but interiors of wagons, all seats and similar equipment were painted green for 1928.

By that time Walter Main had made so many complaints about alleged abuse of his title that show manager Howard King was ready to change. Therefore, the 15-car show became Gentry Bros. and Main's name went to the 10-car outfit. An additional year was all that could be salvaged of the title rental because the Kings and Main came to the parting of the ways after 1928. Gentry continued on 15 cars, but the smaller outfit was entitled Cole Bros. for 1929. That was the final season for Gentry. Bad business brought it to a close at Paris, Tenn., in October. The Warren Tank and Car Company reclaimed four steel cars. The Donaldson Lithograph Company bought the rest of the outfit for \$10,000 to protect a \$14,000 paper bill. Some of the equipment went to Andrew Downie. The title next was used by Sam B. Dill. Some of the wagons went to the Smith Carnival and the exact whereabouts of the others immediately after the sale is not known. The calliope, however, turned up at the Ford Museum at Dearborn, Mich., where it's exhibited today.

John Pluto again crossed the trail. He used the Cole Bros. title in plans for a 1926 show. Pluto bought a two-car outfit from Elmer Jones and a single car from



Mr. King enjoyed placing his own likeness in the newspaper ads and on the billing. This 1926 Gentry lithograph shows Floyd as one of the "brothers" at the upper left. Jess Adkins, manager of the Gentry show, is on the lower right. L. A. Estes Collection.

Floyd King, but illness prevented his going out. The circus was stored at Louisville, probably at the King Bros. quarters. Then in 1929 the Kings were in need of a new title and acquired from Pluto the paper and name of Cole Bros. Circus. They paid \$25.00 weekly for the title, although Pluto's claim to it was rather hazy.

In the 1929 summer tour of Michigan, King discovered a case of smallpox on his show just as health authorities came on to investigate reports about it. The show spirited away the sick man by putting him in a car and starting for the countryside. A policeman flagged down the car and Floyd feared the whole thing was up for grabs. But it developed that the policeman really was curbing the car only to make way for King's own street parade.

The entire Gentry show is shown on a lot in 1927. Floyd is pictured as one of the "Gentrys" on the side show banner. Pfening Collection.

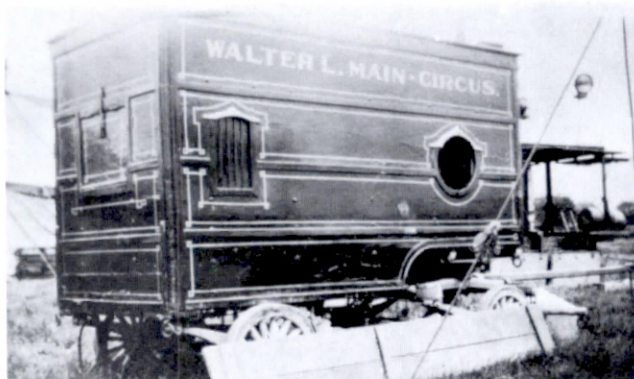
The cop sat on the fender to watch the parade while Floyd sat in the back seat with his feet on the sick canvasman. Once the parade was gone, the car continued, and the plague went undiscovered.

The show opened for 1930 out of Brenham, Texas, and headed for the West Coast, with Floyd King as manager. The Depression had struck with a vengeance in October and now people couldn't buy circus tickets. King was unable to keep up payments on his new Warren steel flat cars so these were repossessed and sold to the 101 Ranch Wild West Show. King, meanwhile, rented replacement flats from the Venice Transportation Company near St. Louis. The show folded in Kentucky during August and was taken to Peoria, Illinois, as the Ingraham & Rutherford Circus. This aborted after one day and the property reverted first to the National Printing Company, who put Austin King in charge of it in Peoria.

In a confused sequence, the show was jumped to Venice, Illinois, and after some time Bert Rutherford, in company with mentor George Christy, came into control of the show. It was moved to South Houston, Texas, and apparently was owned by George Christy. He offered it for sale several times during the 1930's. It sat there virtually intact so far as wagons were concerned until about 1948. It was this Floyd King show, never actually operated by Christy, which comprised the bulk of circus equipment in Christy's quarters by this time. Ultimately, the ten baggage wagons were burned. The calliope was sold to a Norfolk Shriner and eventually was bought back by Floyd King for his motorized show. The tableaux included two from Gentry and the one Floyd bought from Sparks. The latter now is in Baraboo. The Gollmar Mirror tableau also went from South Houston to an eventual home at Baraboo. The Gentry tableaux were owned by the Senhauser brothers in Ohio for several years. The ticket wagon and one or more cages were last used by a California school teachers' circus.

Floyd King recalled later that, "We had built up two nice shows and had them all paid for—just doing nicely—





This small ticket wagon was built in the Ft. Knox winter quarters early in the 1920s. It was small enough to fit in the old Sparks tunnel car, that later burned on a siding at Ft. Knox. It is shown here on the Main show in 1928. Woodcock Collection.

when the Depression hit and you couldn't sell a 50¢ ticket for a dime."

Circus business is a small world. Now Floyd went back to the Al G. Barnes Circus as press agent, the show he had left in 1912. It had recently been purchased by Ringling from Jerry Mugivan with whom King had declined an agent's job for the Floto show. Barnes now was managed by Buster Cronin whom Floyd and Howard King had opposed as a new partner in 1926. Late in the 1934 season, the Ringling management transferred King to the press department of Hagenbeck-Wallace which now was managed by Jess Adkins, the former employee of the King brothers.

Adkins was jelling a deal with Zack Terrell for framing a new circus. Terrell had been manager of Sells-Floto and at this time was operating the "Live Power" show for the Standard Oil Company at the Chicago World's Fair, featuring animals of Allen King. At the end of the 1934 season Adkins and Terrell announced their plans for a new circus and began work on it at Rochester, Ind.

They appointed Floyd King as general agent and he was instrumental in their settling on Cole Bros. as the new title.

When Adkins and Terrell shopped through Depression stricken winter quarters for usable show equipment, they acquired some from Robbins Bros. which included the Russia tableau which the Kings once had owned. At the Christy quarters Adkins and Terrell passed up equipment of the defunct Cole Bros. Circus and took instead the bulk of the wagons from Christy Bros. Circus. They bought equipment from the bankrupt 101 Ranch Wild West Show and this may well have included some of the steel flat cars that had been on King's circuses.

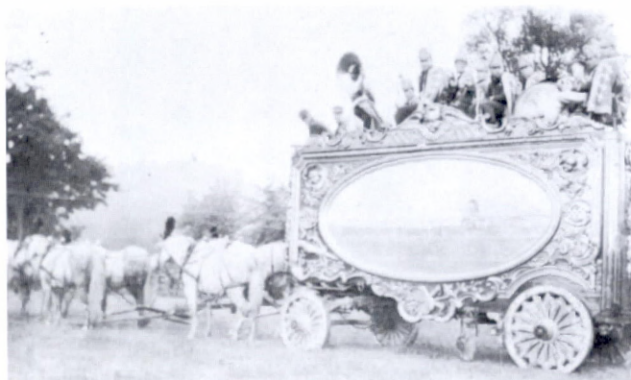
Floyd King thrived as agent for Cole Bros. Circus from 1935 through 1937. Howard King operated a motorized circus in 1934. Since they had done so well under the Rice Bros. name years before,

Howard made use of that title again.

With the coming of 1938 Floyd King was in for new action. Adkins and Terrell, while continuing as partners, found that conflicts arise when two owners are present simultaneously. They earlier had hoped to have two shows and those plans fell through. But in 1938 it was considered time to divide. So, Jess Adkins took the 15-car Robbins Bros. Circus and chose Floyd King as general agent. Meanwhile, Zack Terrell continued with Cole Bros. Circus and appointed Jake Newman as agent. King routed Robbins Bros. into Canada and was doing fairly well. Cole Bros. played the route Newman laid out for it in the U.S. and did poorly. This was the season, of course, that collapsed the Tim McCoy Wild West Show, Downie Bros., Seils - Sterling, Ringling - Barnum and several other outfits. In order "to save the show," it was decided to put Cole Bros. on the Robbins route in Canada and to come up fast with a new route for Robbins. This job fell to King. Cole did somewhat better in Canada, but when it got to Massachusetts it was strange territory for that title and business dropped again.

King was made general agent for both shows, and he agreed to step into the breach for Cole Bros. on the condition that they would resume giving parades and that they would use a postal herald. Neither condition was met.

This writer caught Cole Bros. Circus at Bloomington, Ill. in 1938. A parade was advertised but failed to materialize. He thought it was historic that he was asked to work as a stick for the side show, but unknown to him and other lot



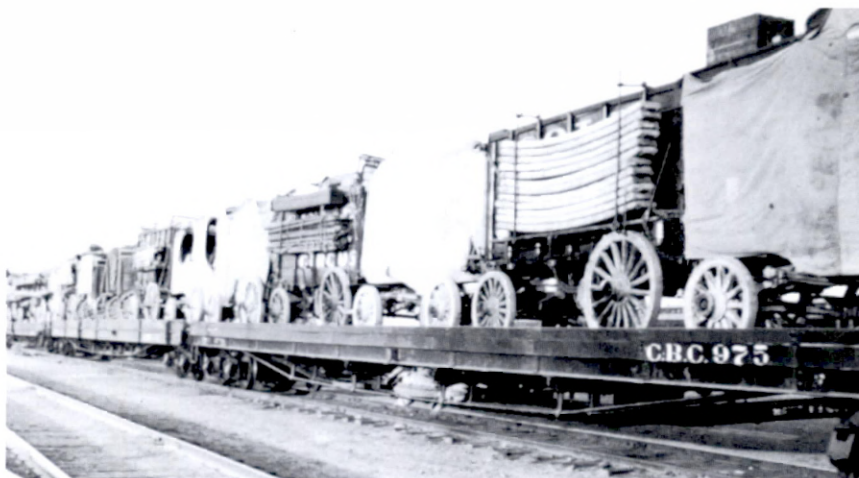
The King brothers bought a group of Ringling tab wagons in Baraboo, one of which is shown here on the 1926 Main show. Woodcock Collection.

lice, there was other show history being made that day. Adkins and Terrell were both on the lot. The Cole route now was scheduled to take it in long jumps to the Northwest. The owners were pessimistic about business prospects and feared the possibility of the show's collapsing far from home. So from Bloomington they contacted Floyd King ahead and asked him to make secret arrangements to take this show to Rochester quarters that night.

He had learned long ago in the agenting business to leave blank but signed contract forms in various railroad offices around the country. So by telephone he could contact the railroad people back in Chicago and give instructions for the secret move. He warned the railroaders so much about the necessity for secrecy that when Adkins and Terrell asked the railroad if any plans had come through for re-routing, the railroad refused to tell the show owners where they were headed. In fact, however, the show did go to Rochester. Then six cars, including the Beatty act and side show privilege people were moved to the Robbins Circus. It continued through the South for one of the best showings of the business in that disastrous year.

One of the new stock cars built for the Gentry show in 1929 is shown here in the Warren Tank Car Co. yards prior to delivery. Frank Norton Collection.





In the 1939 season the Adkins and Terrell combination was back down to a single 20-car show and their general agent was Floyd King.

In February 1940, the Cole Bros. quarters went up in flames, and Jess Adkins died that June. This entailed re-incorporation and the movement of the show to Louisville, Kentucky. But King wasn't there when the Cole show moved to what had once been King's quarters town. Instead, he was briefly with Polack Bros. Circus in 1940, and in the same year he started his wild life shows, using the title of National Sportsmen's Wild Life Exhibit. This show included small box cages of minor animals, and they were exhibited either in tents at fairs or in vacant store fronts. He began with one show in 1940, duplicating an operation of J. C. Rosenheim. These walk-through ding shows grew to a fleet of four by 1945. The business proved pretty good, and Howard King joined. He continued

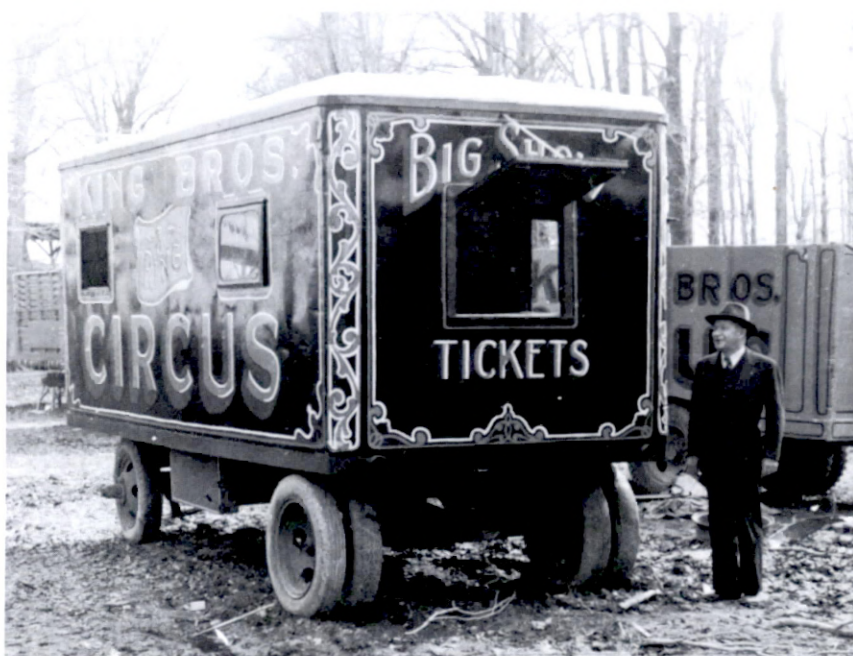
The 1930 Cole Bros. Circus was the last rail show owned by Floyd King. Charles Puck Photo.

with wild life shows at carnivals until about 1952. Meanwhile, Floyd King had other operators in charge of his units, among them J. C. Admire with a wild life show on Wallace Bros. carnival in 1947.

That was the year that Floyd's own wild life show reached Seattle. It played in a store front there all summer, and a local merchant, H. J. Rumbaugh, was a frequent visitor.

Rumbaugh, a circus fan, knew of King's background and was eager to angel a show. King turned down the offer initially, but Rumbaugh came back two or three times.

A proud Floyd King stands next to the newly painted ticket wagon, in the Hartford, Ky., winter quarters of the new King Bros. Circus in 1946. Burt Wilson Collection.



Circus business was very good with the ending of the war. At the same time empty store fronts became nearly non-existent. So when Rumbaugh turned up at Shreveport, La., in November of 1945 to repeat his offer to angel a circus, Floyd King said "Splendid."

The result was King Bros. Circus of 1946. This marked the first time that King used the King Bros. title. It also was his initial step into truck circus, although his wild life shows had been motorized.

They bought Bud Anderson's show as a starter (and since Anderson had gotten much of it from the King Bros. operated by Allen King, Floyd now had stuff from a non-relative who had used the same title). They also acquired the Clyde Beatty Circus, which had been Wallace Bros. up until 1944, and sold off what they did not need. As a portent of things to come, the King performance included the younger branch of the Cristiani Family, the so-called Little Cristiani.

This King-Rumbaugh partnership extended through the 1947 tour. That one included the Little Cristiani, the Guice Troupe of Sparks fame, the MacIntosh Trio of Wallace fame and the DeRiskie Family. Then Rumbaugh and King split up amid a violent argument and legal action. Floyd came out in possession of the show, having bought Rumbaugh's share for a reported \$45,000.

The 1948 tour was rough. King apparently sold trucks along the way to help keep it going. When the steam calliope truck hit a war monument, it was abandoned. Agent Mal Fleming was sent ahead to arrange for a winter quarters in Texas. He set three, but the show couldn't last it out and folded into the first one, Rosenberg. Employees helped themselves to all sorts of equipment as they left. One took off with a truck and its load of concession equipment; the FBI stopped him in Alabama and had him bring it back.

Floyd's show had just \$36.85 in the wagon when it closed in 1948. It had been a rough season. But he had played that route before, too, and not only got the show through the winter but even into action again. When R. M. Harvey visited quarters he knew that the show was broke but noted that King was evincing no doubt about going out again. Harvey asked, "Floyd, how are you going to manage?"

"Why it will open automatically," he said. "I'll just move the cookhouse."

That's what he did. People joined out as soon as King let it be known his cookhouse was open. And he kept local people in line with the free use of passes, just as he had explained to Harvey he would.

There was another big step that winter. King had fallen behind in what he owed the Little Cristiani troupe. So the main Cristiani appeared on the scene, and the show went out in 1949 owned half by

King and half by Lucio Cristiani. The main Cristiani Family, some 30 persons, were on the show and comprised most of the program.

It was the same ownership in 1950 that took the Cristianis, seven elephants, and Tony Diano's giraffe across Upper Alberta, down the West Coast and across the South to Macon quarters. The '51 show was bigger, with 12 bulls, Hugo Zacchini, aluminum poles and a canvas spool. Business was phenomenal in New England and the South. In Ohio they switched fixers, changed side show policies and came to depend more on local auspices and promotion. For 1952 they used auspices, paraded daily with a steam calliope the Kings had owned 25 years before, used heavy billing and bucked Ringling for towns. Things were going great. They even tried to lease the Hagenbeck-Wallace title in this period; Art Concello okayed it but John North vetoed the plan.



The street parade was always a feature of a King owned organization. This little wagon originated on the V & H Circus and was featured many seasons on the King show. This photo was taken in 1952. The wagon is now in the Shelburne Museum. Tommie Randolph Photo.

Both King and the Cristianis drew salaries from their partnership. That partnership was a 50-50 deal. But from time to time it needed funds and while the Cristianis had cash to put in, King some times did not. So the partnership frequently owed money to Cristiani, who therefore held what amounted to a controlling interest.

The 1953 edition had 51 trucks back and three ahead. The nut was about \$4400; they used phones, parade and paper. But the real novelty was a balloon ascension, something not seen on circuses or much of anywhere for decades. While it didn't get into the air too often, it was great to advertise as a free act. The season was the best of all for the King-Cristiani partnership.

Then it blew up; disagreement had been brewing for a while and now came to a head. Cristiani wanted to put the show on rails. King reportedly resisted this idea. Cristiani wanted to continue the partnership; King felt that he and Arnold Maley were too greatly outnumbered by the 34 Cristianis. They quibbled

about dividing the equipment. When Lucio Cristiani seemingly stalled on splitting the show, King and Maley formed a new company and began buying Cole Bros. elephants and talking of a purchase of more Cole equipment.

On February 17, 1954, Floyd King announced buying the Cristiani share for \$74,417 and leasing Cole Bros. Actually, he and Maley had bought \$90,000 worth of Cole Bros., including the elephants and title. King and Maley took out the King Bros. Circus on 54 trucks. They used a parade, played auspices, and trouped 16 elephants. Personnel included Ira Watts, Walter Jennier and the Riding Conleys. The nut was around \$4,000, and they were paying several hundred per day to Cristiani and former owners of the Cole stuff. Even so, they managed to do well enough that they paid ahead of schedule on the Cole debt.

In 1955, King and Maley went again, this time with 70 trucks, a 130 with three

50s, panel side show fronts off of the rail show Cole, and a creditable street parade. This undoubtedly was the biggest truck show ever. They called it King Bros. & Cole Bros. Combined.

But business went sour. And now it came out that not enough work had been done over the winter to ready or replace the trucks. Failure of transportation combined with the lack of business to put the death rattle onto the show.

With anyone else at the helm, that opera would have closed in the spring. But King-Cole kept going. They dropped off six trucks as they passed Peru, Ind. Others failed along the way and either were abandoned or had to be picked up later. Soon there were too few operating trucks to move it and they had to shuttle elephants, horses, seats and more in order to stay in business.

There was one crisis after another. In Illinois the sorry caravan was curbed by state police in a district that always gave



Mr. King had this fine ticket and office wagon built around 1952, for use on the King Cristiani show. It was used six years later on the Cristiani show. Bob Good Photo.

shows trouble. Extensive efforts by Illinois friends of the circus helped save the day. Only the continued miracle of King's abilities to move a moneyless circus got it up and going out of that police lot and into action again.

In August it was federal tax agents. They came on at Greenville, S.C. for \$65,000 in back taxes. For three days U.S. agents were in the wagons, on the track boxes, at every other money point on the show. That gave the show time to work out a deal by which it would pay the nut each day, then pay most of what remained toward the tax debt.

On November 19 it was back in Macon. It had made the season with ten license plates for up to 70 trucks. It was home but that was all.

Now King and Maley, long-time partners, friends and associates, fell victim to the pressures of the season and split up. This came to an actual division of the equipment, with one and then the other picking what he wanted, choose-up-sides fashion. Each took a King Bros. Circus on the road in the spring of 1956; neither stood much chance of success or even survival.

The season of 1956 was another 1938

STATE FAIRGROUNDS
FRIDAY
MAY 13

Auspices Franklin Co. Post Legion

KING
BROS.

AND
COLE
BROS.
COMBINED
CIRCUS

Every Morning at 11:30 A. M.
 Biggest richest street Parade ever



—disastrous for circuses. Clyde Beatty refused to work on May 9 and that was it. The separated off-shoot King Bros. shows went next. They had made superhuman efforts to keep going. Their equipment was dribbled all along the Eastern highways. There were court actions growing out of 1955 and 1956 experiences. Maley's King unit closed once, struggled along a few more days as Maley's Three Ring Circus and then as Barney Bros., under different management. King's unit closed finally in Pennsylvania. Then Floyd King revived it and King stepped aside. But inevitably both units of King Bros. Circus came to a halt. That was in June.

Floyd King's first reaction was to get a job with Ringling-Barnum. He was back at what he knows best, advance work, and he was at last freed of the mountains of worry and responsibilities that had been his with shows of his own. However, Ringling had its own problems and they came to a head at a suburb of Pittsburgh, July 16. The show closed its season, announced it was giving up tents, and went back to Sarasota.

Now many of the circus executives of the country were at liberty at the same time. Three of the top shows had closed. There were several men available for any job that might open up. Jobs did open up. Frank McCloskey, Walter Kernan and others got control of the Clyde Beatty Circus and prepared to set sail again. To route it they turned to Floyd King. The show opened at Demming, N.M., and played across the South to Sarasota, getting good business all the way.

That winter they converted from rail to truck operation. A few years earlier, King reportedly had opposed changing the King-Cristiani to rails; now he op-

The 130 foot big top of the giant 1955 King Bros. & Cole Bros. Combined Circus. Eddie Jackson Photo.

posed changing Beatty to trucks. But it did go to rubber.

Today Floyd King is still ahead of the Clyde Beatty & Cole Bros. Circus. For 11 seasons he has steered it around the country to good business. McCloskey stays on; Kernan died; Art Concello bought in; other partners sold out or died.

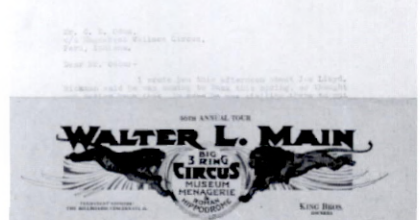
In the meantime, the title of King Bros. Circus has seen more action. The so-called Little Cristianis framed a new show and leased the King title; it will be recalled they were with the King show in the 1940s, too. Benny Cristiani headed this later one, and so it was known widely by the nickname of "Benny Bros. Circus." Then McCloskey and Kernan became involved with another show; they dropped its old name and leased the King Bros. Circus name from Floyd's wife, Vicki.

In recent seasons, Floyd King has routed not only the Beatty-Cole show but also the King Bros. Circus and in some seasons the Sells & Gray Circus.

Circus business continues to change and often shrink. Agents are in very short supply. But a few of the old pros still are in action. And the greatest of these is Floyd King.

This agent's post with the Beatty show has run more years than any other single connection in King's career with the exception of 1919-1930, when he was owner of his own outfits. But those were such different types of shows they don't count the same. It seems likely he will go right on as agent for that show. But if big changes should come to the business, you can bet that King will be "with it" somehow.

For as long as showmen put rope to stakes, Floyd King will be with it and for it. He'll be regarded always as one of circusdom's historic personages, one of the greatest agents ever, and one of the keenest observers of circus techniques.



This selection of letterheads traces the history of some King owned shows. He has always had a fondness for pink letterpaper, a number of these are on that color stock. The "Hit Parade" was a 1939 promotional show operated by King. He used the Robbins title on a street show in 1940. Pfening Collection.

1966 CONVENTION
CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY
JULY 7, 8 & 9
BARABOO, WISCONSIN

The Circus Commemorative Stamp

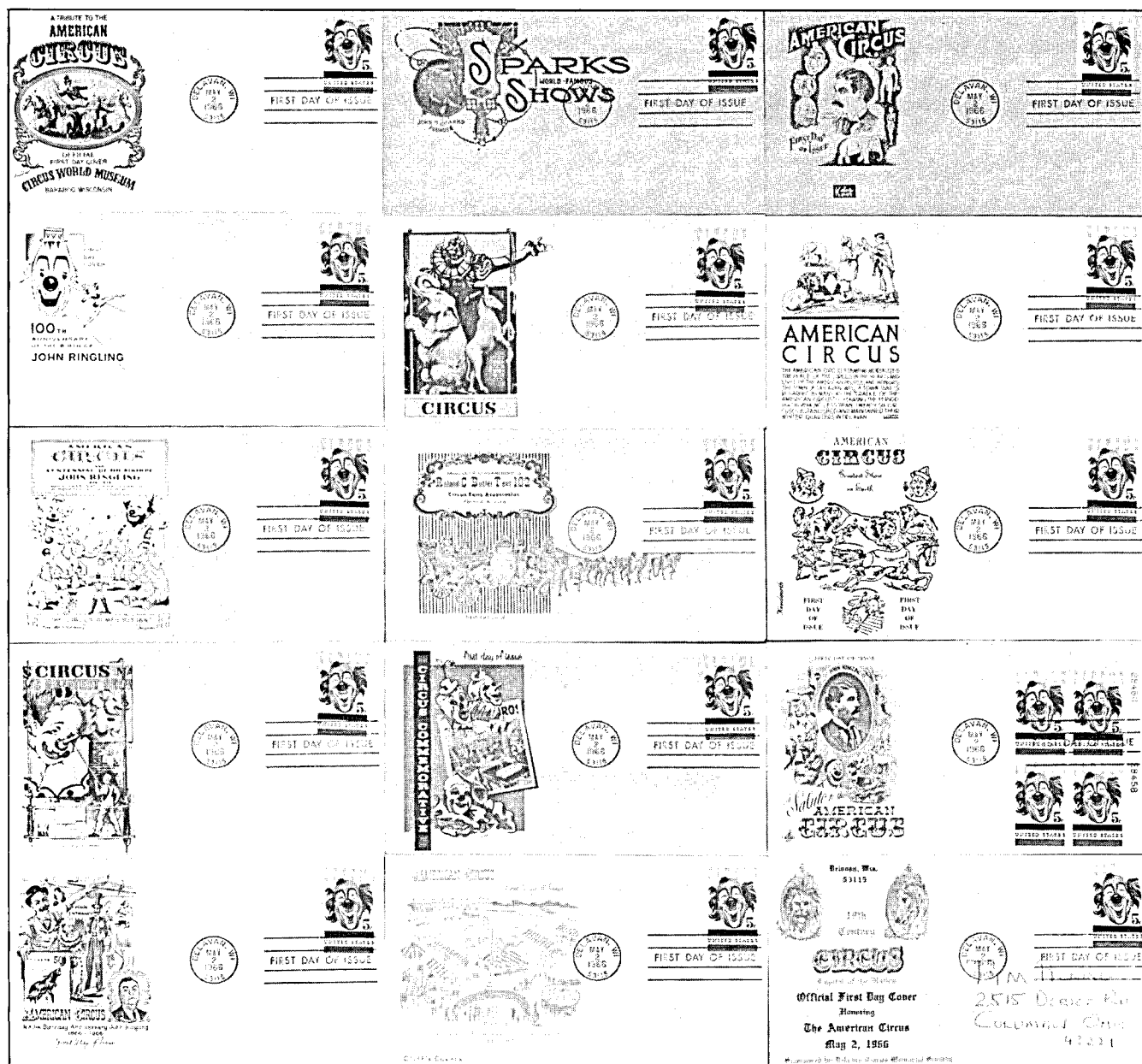
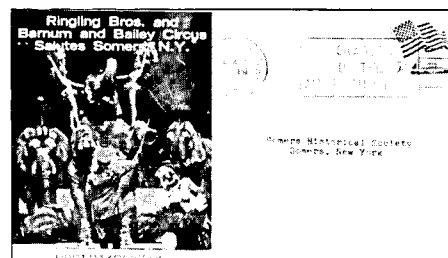
May 2, 1966, was a memorable day in the old circus town of Delavan, Wisconsin. This resort city in southern Wisconsin, was selected as the cancellation post office for the circus commemorative stamp. The first day of issue was May 2, but the city conducted a two day program, that included a parade, a circus performance in the high school, a conducted tour of the circus burial lots and a philatelic exhibit.

Out-of-town circus and stamp buffs arrived on Sunday to take part in the activities that began on May 1st. Chairman Y. Gordon Yadon, CHS member and Postmaster of Dela-

van, was chairman of the stamp program.

Originally it was planned that the stamp would honor the 100th birthday of John Ringling. Some of the cachet envelope designs for the first day cover pictured Mr. Ringling and mentioned his 100th birthday. But the final design of the stamp, in a modern style, showed a clown face, much like that used by Lou Jacobs.

One of the most colorful and well designed envelope designs was made by the Circus World Museum, of Baraboo, Wisconsin. Another attractive cover was made up by the Roland C. Butler Tent, of the CFA, showing the Two Hemisphere bandwagon, with an eight horse hitch. A selection of many of the first day cover envelopes are shown here with the first day of issue cancellation.



EACH YEAR A THOUSAND ADDED NOVELTIES.

SELLS BROTHERS

50 Cage Menagerie and Great 4 Ring CIRCUS

AVIARY, DEEP SEA AQUARIUM AND WONDERFUL WORLD'S EXPOSITION.

THE SELLS BROTHERS BANDCHARIOT and their 50-CAGE MENAGERIE

By Richard E. Conover

The Sells Brothers Bandchariot is one of the ten better examples of the upwards of forty-five "shell" bandwagons that can be identified from actual photographs. There are about ten others which almost anyone would agree are exceedingly plain or even downright crummy, while the relative elegance of the remainder is largely a matter of individual preference. Lest the number 45 gets fixed in anyone's mind as the final count of such vehicles, I will hasten to add that I am quite sure and certainly hope that many more will eventually turn up.

To differentiate from bandwagons in general, a shell bandwagon can be defined as one in which the bandsmen rode

inside, with part of them, at least, having their feet on the floor of the wagon bed. This is in contrast to the "tableau-baggage" type of bandwagon on which the musicians rode on the roof. This latter type became more prevalent after the turn of the century, because they could double more efficiently as load carriers and could haul more property when the show moved.

If we had photographs of all of the shell style that were known to exist before people began to take pictures, we would have considerably more than forty-five. The earliest reference to a bandwagon that has been called to my attention was the mention of one in an 1843 ad of one of the Flatfoot shows. This ad

did not even carry a cut, so no assessment is possible of just how elaborate this one might have been. By the late 1840's, we do have newspaper ads and a lithograph or two which serve to verify that the circuses were investing profusely in the imagination and skill of the best artisans. In those early days, a circus considered that it had done its duty to the public if it lavished all of the splendor possible on the bandwagon. This glittered with gold and mirrors and was always the center of an admiring crowd until it was covered with canvas for the jump to the next stand. Nothing much was done to add other elaborate features until Seth B. Howes imported some tableau wagons from England in 1864 (reference: my article in the July-August 1961 *Bandwagon*, titled *The European Influence on the American Circus Parade*).

To assume, without a confirming photograph, that the bandwagon illustrations in these old newspaper ads and other advertising media that have been preserved are accurate, or even approximately so, is generally risky. So far, we have all too few photographs and probably none, or at least none that we can correlate, of the pre-1865 examples. Between 1866 and 1870, ads appeared illustrating four of our more elegant examples that substantially agree with photographs made of them many years later. The earliest of these examples was the Van Amburgh Bandchariot of 1866. Joe Bradbury covered what he knew of its history in his article on the Rhoda Royal Circus that appeared in the May-June 1961 issue of the *Bandwagon*. Another of the four is this Sells Brothers Chariot — but at a date before the Sells show was organized in 1872.

The sketch reproduced in Photo No. 1 is from an 1874 Forepaugh courier. The same, but less reproducible drawing, also appeared in that show's 1868 herald. Since in those days rival circus owners had absolutely no qualms about pirating



Photo No. 1 — Sketch of the "Sells" bandchariot appearing in an 1874 Forepaugh Courier. (Pfening collection)



Photo No. 2 — Subject bandchariot in a Sells Brothers parade of the 1880's. Photograph acquired from the late Ed. Hillhouse.



Photo No. 3 — Best side view, probably taken on Sells Brothers. (McClintock reproduction)

each others' cuts, the sketch is proof only that the wagon existed before Sells owned it and not necessarily that it was on the Forepaugh Circus. Note, particularly, that the artist who made the sketch diagramed every significant bit of carving, even the heads of the two dogs, or whatever they are, on either side of the central medallion. While we cannot absolutely concede that it was originally a Forepaugh wagon, a slightly more logical than farfetched conjecture, which is well worth keeping in mind pending the accumulation of additional evidence, would be to assume that it originated with Forepaugh about 1867, replacing one offered for sale that year. Then it would be somewhat logical for it to have left Philadelphia either in the spring of 1871 with the Rosston, Springer, & Henderson Circus, which Adam Forepaugh may have had a piece of, or to have it join that show after the fall of 1872 when Forepaugh definitely did buy it. In 1873 Forepaugh and Montgomery Queen launched the Montgomery Queen Circus with equipment from the 1872 Rosston, Springer, & Henderson. Late in the same year, Queen bought Forepaugh out and continued the operation through 1877 at which time he ran into trouble. This was a railroad show that was sold at a sheriff's sale in Louisville, Kentucky, in February, 1878. The brothers Sells were there in force purchasing suitable equipment to transform their wagon show into a rail operation. However, since we have chosen to tread on uncertain ground by admitting an artist's sketch as evidence, we are also committed to look at the minus side of the ledger. This is in the form of an 1877 Montgomery Queen courier in which a tableau wagon they definitely did have was more or less adequately represented by a sketch, while the sketch for their bandwagon does not even remotely resemble this article. So all that we can say for certain is that the vehicle antedates the Sells Brothers Circus and that, therefore, they acquired it

secondhand—a fact that has been the traditional story for some time with all the speculation as to from whom they acquired it, and when, being still unresolved.

The earliest, datable, picture we have of this chariot on the Sells show is 1882. This photo is too poor to reproduce; but Photo No. 2 is probably almost as early because, if it was taken in Leon, Iowa, as represented, it can be dated as 22 July 1885. This bandwagon stayed with Sells Brothers through its last year of independent operation in 1895. In later years, we have several pictures of it on Forepaugh Sells, that combined show which was launched in 1896 when James A. Bailey bolstered up the tottering Sells interests with his cash and the Forepaugh title. In the 1896 Forepaugh Sells inventory, published by Fred Pfening in the January-February 1964 *Bandwagon*, it is listed as wagon No. 57 with a length of 18 feet. This would seem to be a bit too long, so perhaps this figure was meant to be the loading length. It was definitely on Forepaugh Sells well after 1900 and perhaps through 1907. By then, that show was Ringling property and they took it off the road in order to put together enough equipment to make Barnum & Bailey presentable. (References: my article in the March-April 1959 *Bandwagon* titled *Notes on the Barnum & Bailey Show*, and my pamphlet *The Affairs of James A. Bailey*, now out of print.)

In 1910, a new wild west show titled Young Buffalo Wild West, owned by Vernon C. Seaver, a Peoria (Illinois) theatre owner, made its debut. There is

a photograph of the lot layout in the 15 October 1910 *Billboard* that places this bandchariot on that 14-car show. Insofar as is known, this is the first utilization of it since it was removed from Forepaugh Sells in or before 1907. The big years for Young Buffalo were 1912 and 1913 when the name attractions were the "past her prime" Annie Oakley, another old-time marksman Capt. A. A. Bogardus, and Col. Frederick T. Cummins who had been the man with the goatee and the big western hat on his own show in 1906. This 1906 show was a failure and Walter L. Main, one of the promoters of it, was still seeking redress from Cummins in 1913. This harassment, valid or not, dogged Young Buffalo most of the season and convinced Seaver that it was time to get out of show business. Therefore, the 1914 edition of Young Buffalo was managed by another party with the equipment leased from Seaver. However, the grifters had a stranglehold on the new manager and virtually ran the show; and, after an unsuccessful season, Seaver claimed his property and sold it to William P. Hall late in 1914.

In 1916, R. Z. Orton stored his wagon show and decided to have a go at rail operation framed from 15 cars of equip-

Photo No. 4 — Sells Bandchariot on Forepaugh-Sells, unidentified location, probably sometime after 1900. Glazier photograph courtesy of Ringling Museum of the Circus.





Photo No. 5 — Former Sells Bandchariot on Young Buffalo Wild West, Peru, Indiana, 1911.

ment leased from William P. Hall. After part of a season, he decided that a railroad show was not for him, turned the property back to Hall, and finished the year out with his wagons. For some time, there has been quite a bit of speculation among the parade wagon buffs as to just which of the several bandwagons that could have been at the Hall Farm at that time would have been on this Orton Brothers Circus. Last fall, I was discussing this with Mrs. W. H. (Babe) Woodcock, youngest daughter of R. Z. Orton, who was with her family on this show. She has quite a vivid recollection that the bandwagon had a pair of carved lions on the front, an impression made doubly clear to her by an incident that occurred when it was upset while being unloaded and the head of one of the lions was buried in the mud. Subsequent effort on my part to shake her story, by showing her photographs of other bandwagons that might have been at the Hall Farm

about this time, certainly left me with no other alternative but to assume that the Orton bandchariot had lions up front—and nothing different.

Now, in our pictorial gallery of forty-five shell bandchariots there are only five which have lions on their fronts. These are:

1. One that is traceable back to the J. M. French Circus of 1867. This one has been lost over the horizon since about 1890.
2. The Forepaugh Lion bandwagon which I now definitely know was elsewhere in 1916.
3. The one that was on the John Robinson until 1911 which in 1915 was leased to the A. B. Miller Carnival. (Reference: page 42 my book, *Give 'Em a John Robinson*.)
4. The one that was from Walter L. Main. William P. Hall probably did own this one for a time; and while its whereabouts are unknown about 1916, the fact that the lions on this one are carved in half relief and affixed to a flat surface is not com-

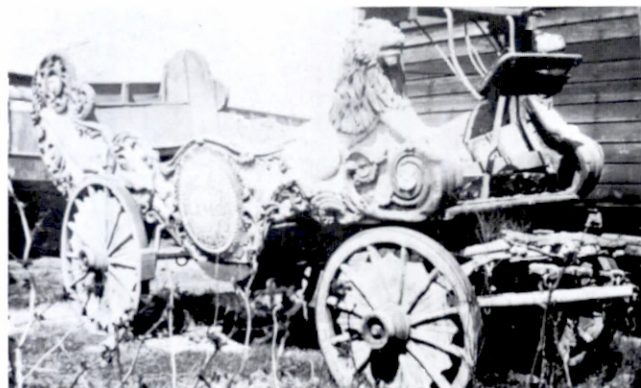


Photo No. 6 — Near the end of its days at the Wortham Carnival quarters, San Antonio, Texas. A Tom Scaperlanda photograph taken about 1928.

patible with Mrs. Woodcock's recollections about the lion's head being in the mud.

5. This Sells Bandchariot, which by availability at the Hall Farm in 1916 and by elimination, is virtually sure to be the one that was on the Orton show in 1916.

This bandchariot, like many other old circus wagons, ended its days on a carnival. We are fortunate to have Photo No. 6, taken about 1928 at the quarters of the C. A. Wortham Carnival in San Antonio by Tom Scaperlanda which documents this. Insofar as is known, there was no interim usage between the Orton show and the acquisition by the carnival.

THE 50-CAGE MENAGERIE

Over the years, quite a few of our circuses have achieved a measure of immortality because of some special innovation. In the case of the Sells Brothers, it was their 50-Cage Menagerie. On first encounter with this claim, one wonders if their count of 50 was not just so much ballyhoo to publicize a quite extensive menagerie; but after a lot of research, I am quite convinced that in 1884, and perhaps the following year also, the number 50 was an honest count.

Their menagerie buildup began in 1880 when they acquired two small hippopotami and exhibited them in a single den. I believe that this was the first and only dual hippo-pond ever carried with a circus. These punks literally grew up on the Sells show and were still making their twice-daily promenade around the hippodrome track for a time after the Forepaugh Sells combine. By 1884, the only other large cages they had were a rhino den, a den of performing lions, and a fourth unit for their giraffe which was paraded with the animal's neck in full view. The rest of the 50 cages were all small "cross cages," a terminology arising



Photo No. 7 — Sells Brothers lithograph for their 50-Cage Menagerie. Distributed by the late Harry Hertzberg as a Christmas card.



Photo No. 8 — Two cross cages from the Sells 50-Cage Menagerie. (McClintock reproduction)

from the fact that they were loaded cross-wise on the flat cars.

The logistics for transporting a 50-cage menagerie with a preponderance of cross

cages on vintage of 1880 rail cars can be closely estimated from an ad that appeared in the *Clipper* of 20 November 1886 in which the W. W. Cole New Colossal Shows was offered for sale. From this detailed, explanatory, ad of this contemporary circus, it can be determined that in the 1880's, just as in the 1930's, the nominal cross cage body dimensions were nine feet long, six feet high, and five feet wide; that the 50-foot flats then available would carry nine cross cages; and also that the 50-foot stocks would load about 22 horses. Therefore, to transport the Sells 50-Cage Menagerie, roughly five flats to carry the cages and four stocks to carry the two-horse teams that pulled them would be required. This assumes, as indicated in the lithograph of Photo No. 7 that the show's ten elephants and camel herd were pressed into service pulling parade wagons. The *Columbus Dispatch* for 16 April 1884 chronicled that the parade was made with all the dens closed and

that the elephants and camels were the only wild animals visible. Besides the cages, there were only two bandwagons, a single tableau-car and the calliope in the parade.

In 1887, their publicity switched from the 50-Cage Menagerie to the Five Continent Menagerie, a meaningless appellation insofar as numbers are concerned. The reduction apparently started in 1886, signaled by an ad that appeared in the *Clipper* offering 35 cages and five 48-foot flats for sale. The fact that they once had a big menagerie was not soon forgotten. The backwash of the wake of publicity was still around in 1910 when my father, who had less interest in circuses than almost anybody, told me about it. It's for sure he never saw it, and would have been too young to remember if he had.

The writer is indebted to Ricky Pfening whose sharp eyes noted that the sketch in the 1874 *Forepaugh Courier* was mighty similar to the photographs of the Sells bandwagon.

READERS COMMENTS.....

RINGLING-BARNUM HIPPO CAGES 1938 - 1965

Readers Gordon Potter, Don Carson and Bob Sams have provided some interesting comments about hippo cages used by Ringling-Barnum.

Commenting on Richard Reynolds' article about hippos in the Christmas issue, Gordon Potter explains that cage No. 78 was not simply renumbered as suggested by Mr. Reynolds. He says that the show did in fact install hippo bathing tanks in two different cages, i.e., No. 78 in 1939 and No. 73 in 1943. Mr. Potter explains that No. 78 and No. 73 were definitely different cages, and has provided some interesting commentary on these wagons.

No. 78 was built in the spring of 1924 to replace the rhino cage that burned in a fire at Bridgeport around January 1924. The old rhino cage that burned is pictured in *Bandwagon*, March-April, 1960, Vol. 4, No. 2, page 3. The 1924 fire also destroyed the show's hippo den, a good picture of which appears on page 18 of the Christmas issue. A new hippo cage was also built in 1924; this was No. 88 pictured in Mr. Reynolds' article. (Note: The losses in the 1924 Bridgeport fire are described in a letter from Ringling-Barnum to Henry Moeller dated February 9, 1924 and reproduced on page 56 of C. P. Fox's book, *A Ticket To The Circus* (1959).

However, getting back to No. 78, it was 16 feet long, 7½ feet wide, and had round corners that were painted with scroll. For the years 1924-1926 it housed the famous Great Indian "armored" rhino Bill. During this time it was painted red and on its sideboards in gold, block style lettering was painted the title "Largest

Living Armored Rhinoceros In Captivity." Bill died in Fort Worth, Texas on September 28, 1926. After this there was never another "armored" rhino to travel in No. 78. However, it was used to house one of the African black rhinos which Ringling-Barnum carried during the early 1930s. In 1939 it was remodeled to accommodate the young hippo "Chester." In order to do this the floor was raised, and a tank was inserted in the forward part of the wagon. This was unusual as most hippo cages had their tanks built in the rear part of the wagon. The Reynolds article indicates No. 78 was not on the show in 1940. True, it was not in the menagerie, but it was carried and housed alligators and props. It traveled on the third section of the train (See Ringling-Barnum 1940 loading order by Gordon Potter, *Bandwagon*, July-August, 1963, Vol. 7 No. 4, page 15), and was spotted in the backyard. The raised floor and tank in the front part of the wagon are clearly shown in the accompanying photo taken by Mr. Potter in 1940. Bob Sams of Birmingham, Alabama, who bought this negative from Mr. Potter, says that No. 78 in 1940 housed the alligators and props for Tanit Ikao, Hindu Mystic, who was the last concert attraction ever used by Ringling-Barnum.

In 1941 and 1942 No. 78 housed the pigmy hippo as stated by Mr. Reynolds. Mr. Potter does not mention No. 78 after 1942, which was apparently the last time it housed a hippo. However, Don Carson writes that No. 78 was again used in 1948 to house the male African black rhino "Robert." That year it was painted blue with silver scroll.

Turning now to cage No. 73, Mr. Potter says it was built for Ringling Bros.

some time prior to 1919. It was, therefore, a much older wagon than No. 78. No. 73 was 16 feet long, 6 feet wide, and had quarter round corners. A distinctive feature was the scroll on the corners. Instead of mere painted scroll, No. 73 had bas-relief carved scroll. There was an "R" carved in a square on the left-front corner and another in the scroll on the right-rear corner. The letter "B" appeared in the scroll on the right-front and left-rear corners. No. 73 was the last Ringling-Barnum cage with quarter round corners to have carved scrolls on the corners. As far as Mr. Potter knows, No. 73 was generally used for lions up until



1942. It was one of the cages that was severely burned in the menagerie fire in Cleveland in 1942. After the fire it was shipped to Sarasota where it was repaired; the gargoyle-like carved splash board and hippo tank were added; and it went out in 1943 as the pigmy hippo cage.

While Mr. Reynolds' article indicates that No. 73 was still used as a pigmy hippo den in 1948, this cannot be verified by the detailed notes taken by Don Carson in 1948. His notes do not show that No. 73 was carried that year.

The Ringling Museum's "Other Side of the Circus"

By Mel Miller, Curator

It will probably be known as the tightest lot in history, for although 16,500 square feet of floor space makes for a fair sized building, when it comes to the layout of a backyard, the cookhouse area, blacksmith top and padroom, all of a sudden the space seems much more suited for a model layout. That's the principle problem confronting us at the Ringling Museum of the Circus as we reach the halfway point in the construction of the elaborate permanent exhibition to be housed in our newest building.

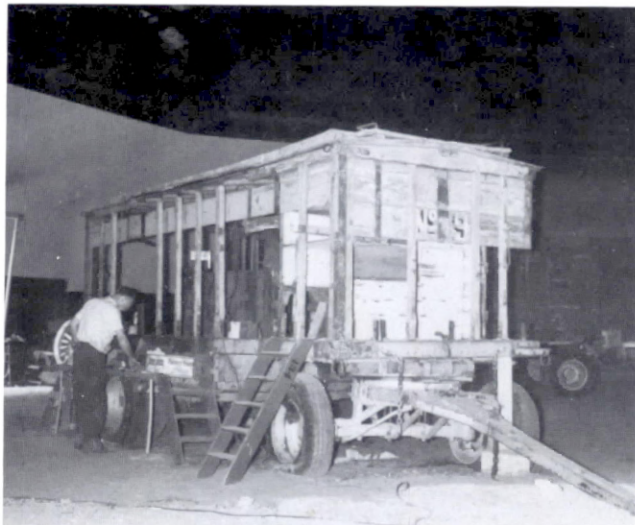
"The other side of the circus" is what we have labelled this ambitious project and when completed will, we hope, transport the visitor into that remote and traditionally sacrosanct world behind the "Big Top."

On entering, the visitor will find himself in the backyard at twilight. It's a summer evening in the 1930's.

As you look back you will notice that you have just walked out the "back door" of the Big Top. From where you stand you can see the lighted tent and you know at once that the show is on. You are aware of the unmistakable music, the candy butchers, and the crowd. On your right is clown alley, with its strange array of laugh provoking devices. There's a prop wagon surrounded by rigging and boxes, and on the left are backyard cages with steel chutes providing an avenue through which the "jungle killers" enter the area.

Before you, stand an array of once familiar wagons, now mostly restored or nearly so. Opposite the back door is wagon No. 93, a seal cage that has been accurately reassembled from the original

1. Ringling blacksmith wagon, No. 9, as restoration begins. All rotted wood has been removed.



2. Joe McKennon, former circus blacksmith, fills the Ringling Museum with nostalgic sounds as he hammers away on old RBBB anvil.

plans. Joe McKennon found the plans by accident one day last winter while sorting blacksmith tools.

As you proceed on into the building, you enter the backyard enclosure and are surrounded by tents and wagons. Ahead is the main dressing room. There are private tops and the wardrobe tent is off to the right. Here also are wagons No. 55 and No. 59. The latter once served as dressing room for the Bradnas.

In front of the wardrobe top stands No. 64 wagon. The interior of the Tailor's shop is being reconstructed in this wagon. His sewing machine, ironing board and a great quantity of boxes containing costume trim and findings are being included in this exhibit.

Nearby are Ringling wagons Nos. 105 and 114. These, together with the Al G. Barnes Light Plant, No. 110, make up the electric department. This one point, seeing authentic Barnes wagons—for there are also others—on the same lot

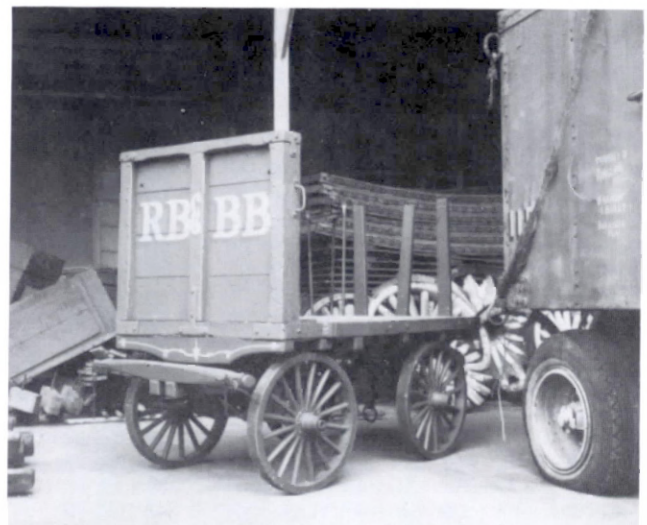
with Ringling wagons might serve to confuse some visitors, so perhaps we should place this entire setting in 1938 after the "wedding" at Redfield.

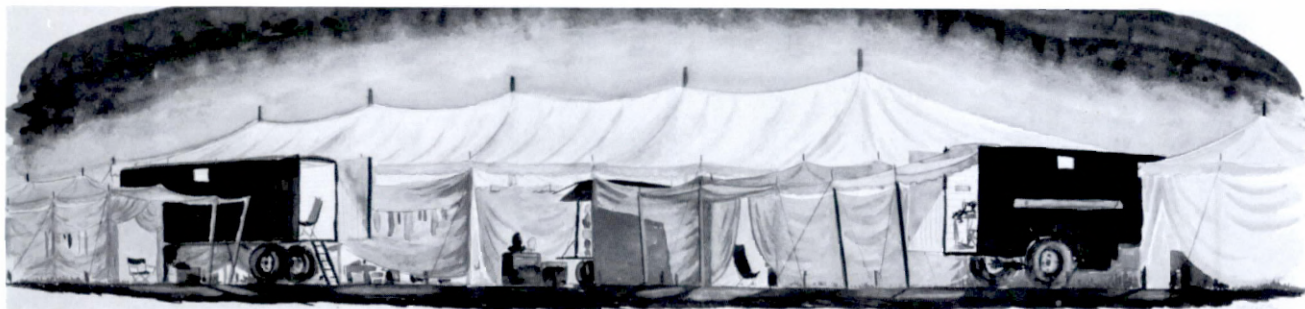
The old diesel generators still remain in No. 110. No. 114 will once again hold its cargo of giant floods and spotlights. The brackets that held the lights were discovered at Sarasota Steel and Salvage Co. here. These and a great number of lights were purchased for replacement in the restored electric wagons.

The Barnes Padroom wagon, No. 76 is fully restored and soon the canvas lean-to will go up along-side to house the harnessmaker's shop. But the real "piece de resistance" is old No. 9. For Joe McKennon, once a blacksmith with Ringling and corporation shows, this has been a true labor of love. Shortly after the Museum purchased No. 9 from the Ringling Circus, Joe asked if he could make this his personal project. First the steel undergear and the "carnival-type" hitch, installed in the late 40's were removed. Back onto the wagon went a set of wooden undergear, Ringling-style wooden foot rests and foot brake. Joe has also made a set of "lead bars" and "body poles" for an 8-horse hitch. Accurate wheels are being made by Hoopes Bros. and Darlington Co. in West Chester, Pennsylvania.

Throughout the entire project, McKennon has been careful to preserve each piece of equipment and detail that could be saved. Where new parts had to be made these were carefully aged and antiqued. It is Joe McKennon's intention that the wagon, when completed, will regain the wonderful character that so many of us remember both on the lot and at those exciting arrivals when out

3. Jim Pepper's old "Gilly Wagon" restored and ready to roll into the backyard.





4. Old paint comes off and new foot rests go on No. 114 from the RBBB electric department.

of the early morning mist "old No. 9" emerged at the head of the Ringling train. Recently Joe was overheard making this proud comment, "Here's one old girl that is really going to show her age."

A water color painting of the inside of the building on completion, as conceived by the curator.

Two authentic Ringling anvils and forges will be set up along with a complete blacksmith layout, all beneath a top recently finished by Leif Osmundsen. Joe McKennon plans to set up the shop showing various repair projects underway and give the visitor the opportunity to get a good look at the unique collection of circus blacksmith tools and their use.

The remaining portion of the lot layout will include reconstructed portions of the cookhouse and dining tent. The wagons seen here will be RBBB Nos. 5 and 6 and the Barnes Commissary No. 24.

While the surface of the lot on which everything stands is dirt, visitors will be able to walk on an asphalt path that meanders around through the exhibition.

Many months of patient work are yet needed to complete this project and



5. Backyard seal cage, No. 93, nearly destroyed in fire at Venice, lives again.

satisfy us that every detail will look as authentic as possible. It is strange how much time is really needed to accurately reassemble "the other side of the circus" in order to make it look as if it were all set up in a couple of hours.

Bill Woodcock's Circus Letterheads



The King & Franklin Circus was a railroad show that operated from 1887 to 1891. W. E. Franklin, the manager, was connected with the John Robinson and Franklin Bros. Circus in 1896. The letterhead is printed in one color-blue black.

1937

COLE BROS. CIRCUS

WITH
CLYDE BEATTY and KEN MAYNARD

The 1937 Season,

Part VII, First Half.

1937

By Joseph T. Bradbury

Although the show was getting a wealth of nationwide publicity it was frankly admitted that Cole was not setting any attendance records during its initial New York City engagement. Business, however, was termed as "comfortably satisfactory." Beginning on the Monday after Easter the show started giving three performances a day, the additional one starting at 10:30 a.m. The lengthy performance was gradually shortened, one example being Cyse O'Dell's act in which she eliminated the web work and did only the one arm planges.

After Easter business did pick up considerably to extent that the lengthy engagement which ended on April 11 could be considered highly successful. The show's personnel, animals, and props were then routed back to Rochester en-route to open the Chicago stand at the Stadium on April 16.

At Rochester the show loaded the additional equipment to be used in Chicago and the train left for the Windy City on April 13. Gordon Potter was at Rochester the day before and made a list of the cages and wagons to be taken to Chicago. The list included all 22 cages; No. 62, Columbia; No. 70, Palm Tree Tab; No. 71, Asia; No. 72, America; No. 79, air calliope; No. 80, France; No. 84, Lion and Mirror; 2 chariots, 1 phaeton, 1 tallyho, 3 fairy tale floats, and 8 baggage wagons which were No. 73, No. 76, No. 77, No. 78 props, No. 83 dogs and

props; No. 74 dogs and trappings; No. 99 ring curbs, and No. 75 pad top canvas and poles. The padroom was set up just west of the Stadium and used just as on the lot when the show was under canvas.

The April 24, 1937 *Billboard* told the story of the Cole opening in Chicago as follows: "12,000 AT COLE BROS.' OPENING IN CHICAGO: PROGRAM AUGMENTED."

"CHICAGO, April 17—Cole Bros.-Clyde Beatty Circus opened its Chicago engagement last night to what was probably the largest attendance ever seen at a circus opening in the Stadium. Crowd numbered approximately 12,000.

"The show, fresh from its New York engagement, arrived in Chicago late Tuesday and immediately began preparations for its stay in the Stadium. Rigging was hung and stages and rings set Wednesday, and first rehearsal was held Thursday morning. On Thursday evening there was a dress rehearsal, preceded by an informal party for the press. The local engagement runs until May 2.

"Show is a beautiful production abounding in color and packing plenty of thrills. It has been largely augmented for the Chicago engagement and has 20 or more acts that did not appear in New York.

"Inaugural pageant, Allah's Garden, is presented in its entirety here and is a kaleidoscopic extravaganza of song, music and dance. Rex de Rosselli, who staged

it, has done a magnificent job, and wardrobe designed by Josephine McFarland, is beautiful. Dancers, directed by Betty Jones, are well trained and make a colorful picture.

"Managers Adkins and Terrell and entire staff here for the opening. Show ran extremely long but is rapidly being trimmed to proper proportions. Has amazing amount of high-grade talent and is far superior to last year's show. The building is arranged differently from last year. Section of seats extending entirely around arena has been removed to make room for animal cages, which make a pleasing display. Lou Delmore's Side Show attractions are set up on platforms along the corridor. Clyde Beatty's act worked smoothly on opening night and, as usual, won tremendous applause.

NEW ACTS IN SHOW

"Among acts working here which were not in New York are Harriet Beatty's lion and tiger riding elephant. It has a touch of spectacular and is nicely presented; Ken Maynard, in an exhibition of trick and fancy shooting, riding, and roping. Ken is still lame, but put on a fine exhibition. Fred Zoeppe, riding act; the Picchiani and Beehee Rubiette acrobatic troupes, and the Great Wilmo, cannon act.

"Ray Dean handles the announcing job superbly, his voice coming thru the public-address system loud and clear. Floyd King has had his billing crews working for weeks and town is thoroughly papered. He has distributed huge eight page heralds arranged in old-time circus style that should prove very effective. Press staff, including Ora O. Parks, Raymond B. Dean and Allen Lester, is doing a good job. Skinny Dawson, former West Coast press agent, is acting as official greeter.

"Addition of many acts here has made the show considerably longer than it should be. Ran more than three and a quarter hours on opening night, with races omitted. Work of cutting now in



Photo No. 1—A panorama showing the Clyde Beatty animal act cages lined up along side of the big top. Note the four cages with identical syboards and corner "carved posts" which were built new during the winter of 1936-37. Photo taken at a 1937 stand. J. V. Leonard Collection

progress will soon bring it considerably under three hours.

"With few exceptions the acts reviewed herewith are those that did not appear in New York. The spec, "Allah's Garden," was larger and more complete here than at the Hippodrome, because of the greater space available. In addition to the Allen Foster Girls from the East a number of girls from the Betty Jones School of Dancing, Evanston, have been added. Costuming of entire show is gorgeous and pageant presents a magnificent appearance. Concludes in a burst of fireworks provided by Thearle-Duffield.

"In Display 2 the Arnold Trio, the La Plaz Brothers and the Harddig Troupe of acrobats provide a pleasing melange of gymnastics, acrobatics and pantomime.

"Display 3 presents Harriet Beatty with lion and tiger riding an elephant. Miss Beatty handles the act with skill and grace, putting the animals thru their paces in a manner that gives the audience a thrill. In Ring 1 John Smith presents a group of well-trained ponies and in Ring 3 Juan Zavatta has a novel act that includes a Shetland pony and a Siamese elephant.

"Display 5—In Rings 1 and 3 Juanita Hobson and Rita La Vata doing lady principal, and in center ring Fred Zoeppe, in an excellent solo exhibition. Miss La Vata is a recent importation from France and Miss Hobson has for years been among the top-notch equestrienne of this country. Both do exceptionally fine work.



Photo No. 3 — Unloading stock cars, Sunday, June 13, 1937, Fall River, Mass. Photo by John Cutler

"Display 6—Aerial gymnasts. Over Rings 1 and 3 Edwards Sisters and Tacoma Sisters doing iron jaw, and spotted about the dome a number of ladder girls. Among those taking part in this number or who will appear on the road are Mary Matson, Louise Drier, Joy Clark, Ann Meyers, Norma Humbes, Ruby Cutshall, Bertha Benham, Wanda Wentz, Pat Lindsey, Betty Stevens, Bobbie Patterson, Viola Barnett, Georgie Sweet, Helen Sharon, Dot Jewell, Joan LaRue, Jackie LaRue, and Ann Winnicki.

"Display 7—Clyde Beatty in his incomparable mixed animal group presen-

tation. Handled with consummate showmanship, this offering packs the ultimate in thrills, climaxing with the roll over and spinning tiger. A great attraction.



Photo No. 2 — Hippo "Pinkey" in No. 28 Den on lot ready for parade, 1936 season. Photo by George Piercy

"Display 10—In addition to the Toyama Troupe and the Zoeppe Family the Nagami Troupe works here, doing clever equilibristic and gymnastic feats.

"Display 11—Besides Prof. Christiansen's well-trained group of ponies in Ring 3, this display is augmented here with the Torellios in center ring presenting

"Display 16—The Amazing Parroffs. An Argentine trio of aerial gymnasts, who keep the audience gasping with their ladder-balancing feats on a small plat-

form high over the arena. A breath-taking turn.

"Display 17—Ken Maynard, Western picture star and Wild West expert, presents a picturesque and colorful display of trick and fancy riding, roping, whip cracking and shooting. Maynard himself is a commanding figure and he has gathered about him a talented troupe of cowboys, cowgirls, Cossacks and Indians that includes Sultan Skakamanoff, Prince Louvenski, Prince Wouffenoff, Al Jones, Ed

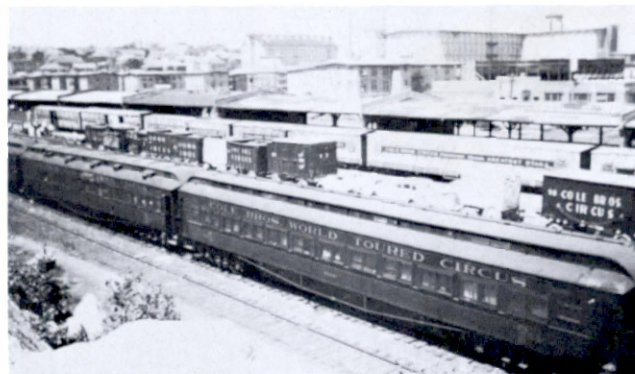


Photo No. 4 — Cole Bros. trains in yards, Sunday, June 13, 1937, Fall River, Mass. Sleepers in foreground, loaded flats on next track, and stock cars in background. Photo by John Cutler

and Rose Davis, Alice and Jimmie Foster, Mary Jeane Keene, Barbara and Terry Bordole and others.

"Display 19—Although Jorgen Christiansen's Liberty horse act was reviewed in New York, it deserves a repetition here. Seldom if ever has there been a more beautiful horse act than this. Christiansen puts his 24 magnificent cream-colored stallions through a series of entertaining routines with the greatest of ease and precision and makes a tremendous hit.



Photo No. 5 — No. 110, Stake Driver, built new during winter of 1936-37 and equipped with hard rubber carnival type wheels, shown here on Fall River, Mass. lot, June 13, 1937. Photo by John Cutler

"Display 21—The Picchianni Troupe, the Beehee-Rubiette Bros. and the Bell-Kress Troupe are here presented in the three rings at the same time and win applause with marvelous acrobatic and equilibristic feats.

"Display 23—High school horses. In New York only eight were used because of limited space. Here the hippodrome track presents an imposing array of wonderfully trained horses, working ensemble and solo. All magnificent animals, expertly handled by attractive equestriennes.

"Display 25—Flying acts over three rings. The Imperial Illingtons, Peerless Lelands, and Flying Harolds presenting a very fine exhibition of flying feats.

"Concluding feature is the Great Wilmo, man shot from a cannon. Act is

lady; Ajax and Broadway Vanity Revue; P. G. Lowery, band and minstrels; Anna Loving, trained pythons; Bobbie Tucker, Jean Darrow, Renee Ramey, Leona Theodora, Irent Spencer, and Nova Talbert, dancers; Alide Chedell, mentalist.

The new Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus was in opposition at Chicago playing at the Coliseum April 7-25. The show claimed good business and the April 24 *Billboard* reported that Hagenbeck-Wallace smashed some attendance records at the Coliseum for April 10 and 11. It was a formidable opponent for Cole alright, an old favorite show with a time tested title and a strong performance highlighted by Terrell Jacobs wild animal act.

Cole Bros. did by far the best business it ever had in Chicago, the take being considerably better than in either 1935 or 1936. The May 15 *Billboard* reported that the Cole take in Chicago was nearly \$200,000 gross with paid attendance for the 34 performances given as 291,365.

After the final performances in Chicago on May 2 the show moved to its home town of Rochester, Indiana where the next day, Monday, May 3 the 1937 under canvas tour began. The magnificent spread of all new canvas was an impressive sight. The big top was a 170 ft. round with three 60 ft. middles and was the largest top yet used by the show. The menagerie top was an 80 ft. round, had 8 center poles, and seven 40 ft. middles. Side show was a 70 ft. round with three 30's. Although the show claimed a larger padroom it was about the same size as the one used in 1936, about a 55 ft.

called it a 170 ft. top it was actually about a 166 ft. top.

The show's new lighting system was the talk of the circus world and later there was a full feature article in *Billboard* about it. No more interior lights were placed on the center poles. Iron standards were spaced around the rings with large shaded lights at the top, while every few feet around the hippodrome in front of the seats were standards topped by large globes, giving indirect and diffused light to the rings and track. The system of lighting resembled the brightly lighted theater stage and the *Billboard* said it was the most effective yet seen with a circus. Likewise the show had a new lighting system for the midway which featured 14 standards 16 ft. high placed along the midway opposite the sideshow with 1000 watt globes on each standard.

The 1937 street parade was a beautiful sight and gave the show a tremendous drawing card. The march was the best yet presented by the Cole show. It was somewhat longer with several more parade vehicles than had been used in 1935 and 1936 and only the limited number of baggage stock prevented it from being considerably longer than ever before. Gordon Potter was on hand at the show's second canvas stand at South Bend, Ind. on May 4 and made the following notes on the parade as it left the lot.

Cole Bros. Circus

Season of 1937 Parade Lineup

- 4 girl Riders (on horses)
- 8 horses pulling No. 84, Lion and Mirror Bandwagon (No. 1 Band)
- 3 girl Riders (on horses)
- 4 horses pulling No. 25 Cage, 3 lions



Photo No. 6 — France and Asia tableau wagons on lot in 1937. Photo by Jack Harris

put on in a spectacular manner and provides a parting thrill for the customers.

"No complete review of the show is given this week, inasmuch as most of the acts were reviewed during the New York engagement."

Lou Delmore had a very strong lineup of attractions for the sideshow which included the Gibb Sisters, Siamese twins; Betty Green, Koo Koo the Bird Girl; Lemore, knife thrower; Anderson Sisters; tiger girls; Forrest Layman, armless wonder; Duke and Pauline Kamakua, Hawaiians; Melba Kaloma, girl of mystery; Cliff Thompson, giant; Margaret, midget

round top with four 28 ft. middles. Cookhouse was 130 x 45. The show claimed in the *Billboard* they would use 3 stable tents in 1937 but the slight addition in total baggage stock would not warrant a full tent and it is believed they were able to make out with only two, the number they had in 1936.

Gordon Potter says that although the show claimed the big top was 170 ft. round actually it was somewhat smaller. Potter says that for 1937 the top had 28 side pole spaces in each round end (4 sections with 7 pole spaces in each). This was only about 19 ft. more in circumference for the round top, or just a bit over 6 ft. in diameter, so although they



Photo No. 7 — No. 80, France tableau wagon with No. 2 big show band in parade at Windsor, Ont., Canada, July 3, 1937. The France wagon was used by Cole Bros. for the first time in 1937. Photo by Don Smith

- 4 horses pulling No. 24 Cage, 4 lions
- 4 horses pulling No. 12 Cage, 3 lions
- 5 girl Riders (on horses)
- 6 horses pulling No. 71, Asia Tableau, Side Show Band
- Mack truck pulling No. 28 Hippo Cage
- 4 horses pulling No. 17 Cage, 3 lions
- 6 girl Riders (on horses)
- 6 horses pulling No. 70, Palm Tree Tableau
- 2 horse Tandem, girl rider
- 4 horses pulling No. 13 Cage, 2 tigers, 1 lion
- 4 horses pulling No. 14 Cage, 3 tigers
- 4 horses pulling No. 15 Cage, 3 tigers
- 4 horses pulling No. 16 Cage, 3 tigers
- 4 horses pulling No. 18 Cage, 3 tigers
- 4 horses pulling No. 10 Cage, 1 gnu
- 4 horses pulling No. 79, Statue Corner Air Calliope

4 girl Riders (on horses)
 8 horses pulling No. 72, America Tableau,
 Clown Band
 4 horses pulling Tally-Ho
 2 horse Tandem, girl rider
 1 horse pulling 2 wheel phaeton
 4 Indian Riders (on horses)
 14 Riders—Cowboys and Cowgirls (on horses)
 3 horses pulling No. 80, France Tableau,
 No. 2 band
 4 horses pulling Chariot
 4 horses pulling Chariot

4 horses pulling No. 11 Cage, 3 bears
 6 ponies pulling Mother Goose Float
 4 horses pulling No. 21 Cage, 3 deer
 4 horses pulling No. 19 Cage, 2 pumas, 2
 leopards
 6 ponies pulling Old Woman in Shoe Float
 2 donkeys pulling Clown Buggy
 6 donkeys pulling No. 82, Unafone Wagon
 6 ponies pulling Cinderella Float
 4 horses pulling No. 26 Cage, 3 lions
 2 Zebras
 4 Camels

6 horses pulling No. 66, Steam Calliope
 (43 units in the parade)
 1937 Parade Totals
 11 Tableau wagons
 15 Cage wagons (7 left on the lot)
 5 Chariots, buggies, etc.
 1 Mack Truck
 7 Riding horses
 100 Baggage horses, 2—8's; 4—6's; 15—4's
 18 Baggage ponies, 3—6's
 6 Baggage donkeys, 1—6
 13 Horses on light pieces

OFFICIAL ROUTE COLE BROS. CIRCUS SEASON 1937

| Date | City, State | Railroad | Miles |
|--------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|-------|
| Mar. 18- | New York City, N.Y. | Erie | 898 |
| Apr. 11, inclusive | Hippodrome (indoor) | | |
| Apr. 16- | Chicago, Ill. | Erie | 998 |
| May 2 inclusive | Stadium (indoor) | | |
| May 3 | Rochester, Ind. | Penna.; Nickle Plate | 105 |
| (Monday) | (under canvas) | | |
| 4 | South Bend, Ind. | Nickle Plate; NYC | 53 |
| 5 | Kokomo, Ind. | Penna. | 92 |
| 6 | Fort Wayne, Ind. | Nickle Plate | 83 |
| 7 | Lima, Ohio | Penna. | 60 |
| 8 | Muncie, Ind. | Nickle Plate | 84 |
| 9, 10 | Indianapolis, Ind. | Big Four | 54 |
| 11 | Terre Haute, Ind. | Penna. | 72 |
| 12 | Anderson, Ind. | Big Four | 107 |
| 13 | Richmond, Ind. | Penna. | 49 |
| 14 | Dayton, Ohio | Penna. | 42 |
| 15 | Middletown, Ohio | Big Four | 21 |
| 16, 17 | Cincinnati, Ohio | Big Four | 34 |
| 18 | Springfield, Ohio | Big Four | 80 |
| 19 | Columbus, Ohio | Big Four | 45 |
| 20 | Steubenville, Ohio | Penna. | 148 |
| 21, 22 | Pittsburgh, Pa. | Penna. | 48 |
| 23 | Sunday | | |
| 24 | Canton, Ohio | Penna. | 102 |
| 25 | Akron, Ohio | Penna. | 47 |
| 26 | Sandusky, Ohio | B & O | 103 |
| 27 | Toledo, Ohio | N.Y.C. | 47 |
| 28 | Cleveland, Ohio | N.Y.C. | 107 |
| 29 | Erie, Pa. | N.Y.C. | 98 |
| 30 | Sunday | | |
| 31 | Buffalo, N.Y. | N.Y.C. | 88 |
| June 1 | Niagara Falls, N. Y. | Lehigh Valley | 27 |
| 2 | Rochester, N.Y. | Lehigh Valley | 96 |
| 3 | Courtland, N.Y. | Lehigh Valley | 120 |
| 4 | Syracuse, N.Y. | Lackawanna | 37 |
| 5 | Binghamton, N.Y. | Lackawanna | 80 |
| 6 | Sunday | | |
| 7 | Albany, N.Y. | D & H | 143 |
| 8 | Schenectady, N.Y. | D & H | 39 |
| 9 | North Adams, Mass. | U & H; B & M | 64 |
| 10 | Springfield, Mass. | B & M | 72 |
| 11 | Worcester, Mass. | B & M | 90 |
| 12 | New London, Conn. | N.Y. N.H. & H. | 72 |
| 13 | Sunday | | |
| 14 | Fall River, Mass. | N.Y. N.H. & H. | 119 |
| 15 | New Bedford, Mass. | N.Y. N.H. & H. | 13 |
| 16 | Lowell, Mass. | N.Y. N.H. & H. | 82 |
| 17 | Keene, N.H. | B & M | 66 |
| 18 | Montpelier, Vt. | B & M; Cent. Vt. | 129 |
| 19 | Burlington, Vt. | Central Vt. | 41 |
| 20 | Sunday | | |
| 21, 22 | Montreal, Quebec, Can. | Cent. Vt.; Can. Nat. | 99 |
| 23 | Ottawa, Ontario, Can. | C.P. | 112 |
| 24 | Kingston, Ontario, Can. | C.N. | 119 |
| 25 | Belleville, Ontario, Can. | C.N. | 47 |
| 26 | Hamilton, Ontario, Can. | C.N. | 153 |
| 27 | Sunday | | |
| 28 | Toronto, Ontario, Can. | C.N. | 40 |
| 29 | Brantford, Ontario, Can. | C.N. | 63 |
| 30 | Kitchner, Ontario, Can. | C.N. | 50 |
| July 1 | London, Ontario, Can. | C.N. | 59 |
| 2 | Chatham, Ontario, Can. | C.N. | 65 |
| 3 | Windsor, Ontario, Can. | C.N. | 46 |
| 4 | Detroit, Mich. | M.C.; P.M. | 9 |
| 5 | Flint, Mich. | P.M. | 74 |
| 6 | Port Huron, Mich. | Grand Trunk | 64 |
| 7 | Bay City, Mich. | P.M. | 103 |
| 8 | Saginaw, Mich. | P.M. | 13 |
| 9 | Lansing, Mich. | M.C. | 65 |
| 10 | Jackson, Mich. | M.C. | 37 |
| 11 | Sunday | | |
| 12 | Battle Creek, Mich. | M.C. | 36 |
| 13 | Kalamazoo, Mich. | M.C. | 23 |
| 14 | Benton Harbor, Mich. | M.C. | 73 |
| 15 | Joliet, Ill. | M.C. | 110 |
| 16 | Elgin, Ill. | Milkw. | 119 |
| 17 | Rockford, Ill. | Milkw. | 54 |
| 18 | Peoria, Ill. | Milkw.; R.I. | 126 |
| 19 | Davenport, Iowa | R.I. | 94 |
| 20 | Cedar Rapids, Iowa | R.I. | 75 |
| 21 | Waterloo, Iowa | R.I. | 54 |
| 22 | Mason City, Iowa | R.I. | 83 |
| 23 | Fort Dodge, Iowa | C & G.W. | 72 |

| Date | City, State | Railroad | Miles |
|---------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|-------|
| 24 | Sioux City, Iowa | I.C.; C&NW | 140 |
| 25 | Omaha, Nebr. | C&NW | 100 |
| 26 | Lincoln, Nebr. | M.P. | 82 |
| 27 | Falls City, Nebr. | M.P. | 105 |
| 28 | St. Joseph, Mo. | M.P. | 76 |
| 29 | Topeka, Kan. | Santa Fe | 72 |
| 30 | Emporia, Kan. | Santa Fe | 62 |
| 31 | Hutchinson, Kan. | Santa Fe | 105 |
| Aug. 1 | Sunday | | |
| 2, 3 | Denver, Colo. | Santa Fe | 504 |
| 4 | Colorado Springs, Colo. | D & R. G. | 74 |
| 5 | Pueblo, Colo. | D & R. G. | 43 |
| 6 | Glenwood Springs, Colo. (nite only) | D & R. G. | 141 |
| 7 | enroute, Saturday | | |
| 8 | enroute, Sunday | | |
| 9 | Salt Lake City, Utah | D & R. G. | 293 |
| 10 | Ogden, Utah | D & R. G. | 37 |
| 11 | Pocatello, Idaho | U.P. | 133 |
| 12 | Idaho Falls, Idaho | U.P. | 50 |
| 13 | Twin Falls, Idaho | U.P. | 168 |
| 14 | Boise, Idaho | U.P. | 216 |
| 15 | Baker, Ore. | U.P. | 149 |
| 16 | Walla Walla, Wash. | U.P. | 171 |
| 17 | Colfax, Wash. | U.P. | 116 |
| 18 | Spokane, Wash. | U.P. | 88 |
| 19 | Wenatchee, Wash. | G.N. | 174 |
| 20 | Everett, Wash. | G.N. | 123 |
| 21, 22 | Seattle, Wash. | N.P. | 45 |
| 23 | Tacoma, Wash. | U.P. | 39 |
| 24 | Aberdeen, Wash. | U.P. | 108 |
| 25 | Longview, Wash. | U.P. | 97 |
| 26, 27 | Portland, Ore. | U.P. | 49 |
| 28 | Salem, Ore. | S.P. | 53 |
| 29 | Eugene, Ore. (matinee only) | S.P. | 71 |
| 30 | Klamath Falls, Ore. | S.P. | 194 |
| 31 | Red Bluff, Calif. (nite only) | S.P. | 211 |
| Sept. 1 | Sacramento, Calif. | S.P. | 135 |
| 2 | San Jose, Calif. | S.P. | 121 |
| 3, 4, 5 | San Francisco, Calif. | S.P. | 47 |
| 6, 7 | Oakland, Calif. | S.P. | 56 |
| 8 | Santa Rosa, Calif. | S.P.; N.W.P. | 106 |
| 9 | Vallejo, Calif. | N.W.P.; S.P. | 52 |
| 10 | Marysville, Calif. | S.P. | 94 |
| 11 | Stockton, Calif. | S.P. | 94 |
| 12 | Modesto, Calif. | S.P. | 30 |
| 13 | Fresno, Calif. | S.P. | 92 |
| 14 | Hanford, Calif. | S.P. | 46 |
| 15 | Bakersfield, Calif. | S.P. | 87 |
| 16 | Oxnard, Calif. | S.P. | 188 |
| 17 | Santa Barbara, Calif. | S.P. | 37 |
| 18 | Glendale, Calif. | S.P. | 95 |
| 19, 20, | Los Angeles, Calif. | S.P. | 5 |
| 21, 22, | | | |
| 23, 24, | | | |
| 25, 26 | Hollywood, Calif. | P.E. | 8 |
| 27 | Santa Monica, Calif. | P.E. | 7 |
| 28 | Pasadena, Calif. | P.E.; S.P. | 28 |
| 29 | San Bernadino, Calif. | S.P. | 51 |
| 30 | Long Beach, Calif. | S.P. | 82 |
| Oct. 1 | Santa Anna, Calif. | S.P. | 43 |
| 2, 3 | San Diego, Calif. | Santa Fe | 92 |
| 4 | El Centro, Calif. | S.D. & E.A. | 148 |
| 5 | Phoenix, Ariz. | S.P. | 244 |
| 6 | Tucson, Ariz. | S.P. | 122 |
| 7 | Douglas, Ariz. | S.P. | 124 |
| 8 | El Paso, Texas | S.P. | 217 |
| 9 | Marfa, Texas (matinee only) | T & N.O. | 197 |
| 10 | Del Rio, Texas (matinee only) | T & N.O. | 197 |
| 11 | San Antonio, Texas | T & N.O. | 169 |
| 12 | Corpus Christi, Texas | M.P. | 150 |
| 13 | Bay City, Texas | M.P. | 147 |
| 14 | Houston, Texas | M.P. | 82 |
| 15 | Galveston, Texas | Santa Fe | 50 |
| 16 | Coose Creek, Texas | T. & N.O. | 111 |
| 17 | Crowley, La. | T. & N.O. | 184 |
| 18 | Alexandria, La. | M.P. | 110 |
| 19 | Monroe, La. | M.P. | 98 |
| 20 | El Dorado, Ark. | M.P. | 77 |
| 21 | Little Rock, Ark. | M.P. | 147 |
| 22 | Jonesboro, Ark. | R.I.; Cotton Belt | 138 |
| 23 | Blytheville, Ark. | Cotton Belt | 59 |
| 24 | Sunday | | |
| 25 | Cape Girardeau, Mo. | Frisco | 106 |
| 26 | Cairo, Ill. | M.P. | 41 |
| 27 | Paducah, Ky. | I.C. | 40 |
| End of Season | | | |

Home Run—Illinois Central to Neoga, Ill.; Nickle Plate R.R. to Rochester, Ind., 407 Miles.
 Total Mileage for Season 16,199

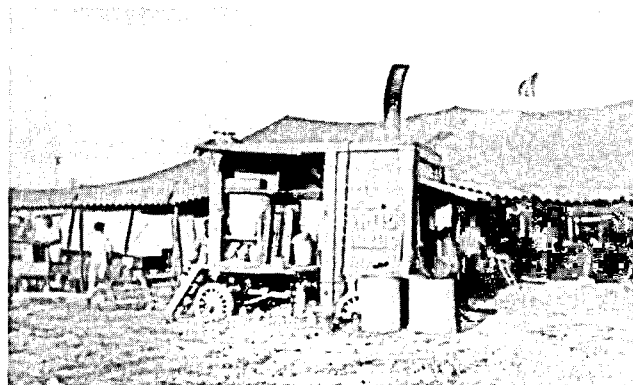


Photo No. 8 — Cole Bros. midway on lot at Galveston, Texas, Oct. 15, 1937. Note Columbia tab used as grandstand ticket wagon, the light standards which gave excellent midway illumination, the 8 pole menagerie tent in near right background, and big top further in distance. Photo by W. H. B. Jones

Potter calls attention to the fact that on the above parade list he made two additions to it. That day at South Bend they only had one of the 4 horse chariots in the parade, and also the 6 pony hitch pulling the Mother Goose Float didn't go out that day. These units were in the march when he saw the parade again at Benton Harbor, Mich. on July 14 and Potter says they made parade other days also as shown in pictures. The Benton Harbor parade had only 16 elephants and 12 cages but they had another buggy and two more 2 wheeled carts. There were only 4 donkeys on the Unafon with one donkey each pulling two of the carts.

Potter makes some further observations concerning the 1937 parade by pointing out that 15 cage wagons out of the total of 22 the show had was about tops for the parade and he speculates often the number was less as evidenced by only the 12 in the Benton Harbor march. They just didn't have enough horses to have

Photo No. 9 — Steam Boiler wagon No. 32, formerly on 101 Ranch Wild West Show, and cook tent on Cole Bros. lot at Galveston, Texas, Oct. 15, 1937. Photo by W. H. B. Jones



any more in the parade. Total number of baggage stock carried in 1937 was about 100, the total used in the South Bend parade. He said that one change he noted in parade photos taken later in the season when show was in California was that there were three 8 ups in the parade, on Lion and Mirror, Asia, and America wagons but they were able to do this only by having fewer than 15 cages in the parade. None of the cross cages have appeared in 1937 parade photos and it is believed the show had only 18 ponies and 8 small donkeys about pony size.

At South Bend one elephant remained on the lot and did not make parade. This made a total of 24 elephants in the herd as of that day.

The 1937 season was now on. The number of railroad shows was up to four again and included the two Ringling owned shows, Ringling-Barnum on 90 cars, and Al G. Barnes-Sells Floto on 30 cars; Howard Bary's Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus on 35 cars, and Cole Bros. on 40 cars. After a few weeks Hagenbeck-Wallace sent 3 cars back to Peru quarters and continued on 32. In addition to the four rail circuses there were fully 30 large and small motorized shows. Some of the larger ones were Downie Bros., Tom Mix, Russell Bros., Seils-Sterling, Wallace Bros., and Walter L. Main.

Cole Bros. was the only railroad show that presented a street parade although Hagenbeck-Wallace had planned to parade and in fact went out fully equipped

for a parade and carried the famous old Five Graces bandwagon, the Two Jesters steam calliope and several other parade vehicles. However, for some unknown reason the show did not parade. Evidently Arlington and Hatch had planned the parade but after Bary got control he canceled the plans for the march. As early season 1937 printed matter and newspaper cuts of H-W mentioned a street parade some historians have thought a few parades were given in the early season, but Gordon Potter was on the lot at the opening canvas stand at Marion, Ind. and reports no parade was given that day and to the best of his knowledge no parades were given at all by H-W in 1937. There were fewer motorized circuses than ever before parading in 1937 but Seal Bros., Haag Bros., and Dan Rice still presented the daily parade and possibly some of the smaller shows continued to parade.

Cole Bros., which had been relatively free of close competition from major railroad circuses in 1936 after the 1935 knock down drag out fights with Hagenbeck-Wallace, now found itself back in the thick of stiff competition from the revived Hagenbeck show under the management of Howard Y. Bary. Although Ringling-Barnum did play several Cole early season towns some weeks later there was no real close opposition from the Big One at the start. The flock of truck shows were everywhere and many were constantly crossing Cole's path but they were only a source of minor irritation as the big 40 car railroader could easily take care of itself. The old 1935 nemesis, Hagenbeck-Wallace, was the major competitor at several early season stands and was ahead of Cole from one to two weeks at most places. An example of the opposition stands in the early days is as follows:

| Stand | Date H-W Played | Date Cole Bros. Played |
|------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| Kokomo, Ind. | April 27 | May 5 |
| Muncie, Ind. | April 28 | May 8 |
| Anderson, Ind. | April 29 | May 12 |

Photo No. 10 — Unafone wagon No. 82 pulled by hitch of mules in parade at Cole Bros. stand at Fall River, Mass. June 14, 1937. Note skyboard of bird carvings which came from cross cage No. 11 carried in 1935. Photo by John Cutler



| | | |
|------------------|------------|------------|
| Dayton, Ohio | April 30 | May 14 |
| Cincinnati, Ohio | May 1, 2 | May 16, 17 |
| Columbus, Ohio | May 3 | May 19 |
| Pittsburgh, Pa. | May 10, 11 | May 21, 22 |

It might be pointed out that Ringling-Barnum also played Pittsburgh July 12 and 13 giving circus fans in that city a real treat of having three railroad shows in during the season.

From the beginning of the season business for Cole Bros. was great. In the next installment there will be printed a ledger giving the gross for both the big show and concessions for stands played by Cole in 1937. From this ledger it can be seen that the show's best business came in the early weeks of 1937, a reverse from 1936 where only so-so business came in the early weeks with the big business coming later on the Western tour. In 1937 just the reverse was true. The accounts of business done at various stands in this narrative are taken from reports the show furnished the *Billboard*. The reader can get the exact amount of business from this official ledger report later.

Unfortunately the early season weather was bad, otherwise the take undoubtedly would have been greater. The spring of 1937 was wet and the rains continued in most sections of the country until well into the season. Especially wet were the mid-western states, the upper Ohio valley region, the East and New England. The new *Life* magazine, which was just getting started, ran a classic series of photos showing Ringling-Barnum's baggage stock struggling in the mud at Lewistown, Maine and many a circus spent many a day in the off used term "sea of mud."

The matinee at Ft. Wayne was lost as the lot was too soft to get ready for an afternoon performance but at night the tent was filled to capacity with folks sitting on the ground up to the ring curbs. At Muncie the first section got in at 5:30 a.m. but the second was delayed due to locomotive trouble, however the parade and two shows went on as scheduled. The two day stand at Indianapolis, May 9, 10, saw the show on a new lot but at three of the four performances the crowd was on the straw. The run to Terre Haute was made in good time with a half mile haul and again the show had two good houses, the night being capacity.

The old Hoosier home state was giving Cole very good business, however other circuses were also reporting 1937 was being good to them. Ringling-Barnum said business at the Boston Garden was 20 percent ahead of 1936. Hagenbeck-Wallace was strawing them in Pittsburgh while Al G. Barnes-Sells Floto was claiming capacity business in Oregon. The motorized shows were also gathering in their share of the dough and Dan Rice Circus reported capacity business in West Virginia. Overall circus business was now the best since the beginning of the depression in 1930.

Cole's final Indiana stand was at Richmond on May 13 and the *Billboard* said

the show used old circus grounds that had not been utilized in several years and as a result the 24 hour man had considerable work to do getting the lot ready. A sudden deluge right before doors opened soaked the matinee crowd waiting on the midway.

At Dayton, Ohio, the next day, the show arrived two hours late due to the delay in getting off the soft lot at Richmond the night before. But the parade left the lot at noon and the matinee started about 3 p.m. There was a big afternoon house and a turnaway at night.

At Middletown, Ohio the first section was in before daylight but a delay was encountered when the sideshow wagon enroute to the lot went into a shallow ditch while making a sharp turn from a bridge onto the lot.

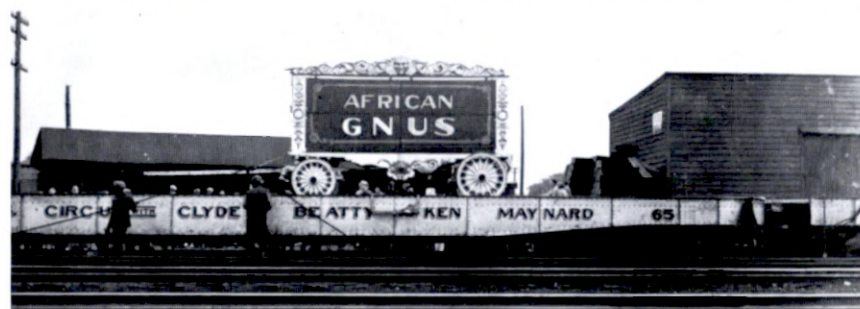


Photo No. 11 — Cage No. 10, formerly Ringling Bros. hay animal den, now housing a gnu, being poled across flat car No. 65 at a 1937 stand. Pfening Collection

A two day stand May 16, 17 at Cincinnati was termed great with folks on the straw at the first matinee. Considerable unfavorable weather and muddy lots continued to plague the show and it was a rainy day again at Springfield, Ohio on May 18 in which it poured most of the day. The parade went out on time and two shows were given. The *Billboard* reported that the back yard at Springfield was a "sea of mud", and that the cold rainy spells had given the Cole personnel their share of colds.

At Columbus the next day the sun came out and it was a perfect day weatherwise and with the good weather came real good business. The rains were not gone for long and a cloudburst hit the second night at Pittsburgh.

The first Sunday off for the personnel in the new season was welcomed at Canton, Ohio on May 23. There was a great turnout of towners on the lot all day and the next day the big top was packed to the ring curbs at night. The June 5 *Billboard* mentioned that it was already evident what a big drawing card Ken Maynard was proving when almost the entire crowd at Canton remained for the after-show.

There was a tight lot at Akron and a short parade route with the parade leaving the lot at 11 and returning at 11:30. The night crowd at Akron was so heavy

it was necessary to cancel the hippodrome races and track numbers.

Cole's run to Sandusky over a B&O branch line from Akron was slow and resulted in a late arrival. However there was a short haul and doors opened on time. Akron gave two good houses, much better than in 1936.

At Toledo the show had rain until 11:30 a.m. and there was an extremely long haul as well as parade route but the parade was downtown before 1 p.m. The Toledo lot was a tough one but the night house was a sellout.

After a good day at Cleveland the show started East and following a stand at Erie, Pa. entered New York May 31 at Buffalo for a big Decoration Day engagement. The show moved across New York and was the first railroad show to

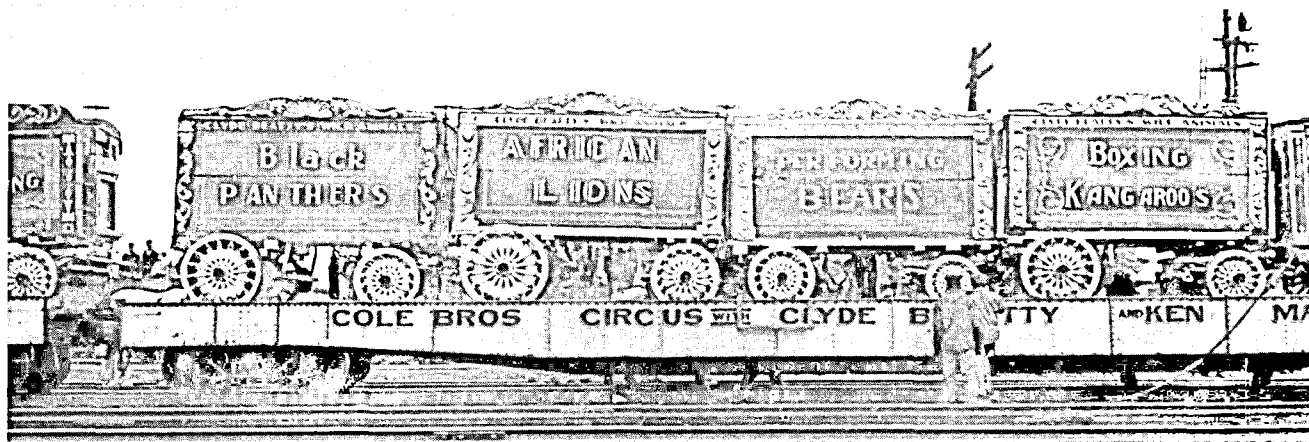
play Courtland in 10 years. Most rail moves were good but some proved to be quite frustrating. Despite a 4 mile haul the night before in Rochester and a move of 180 miles on the Lehigh Valley Railroad over three divisions the first section arrived in Courtland at 10:20 a.m. Complications then arose and the first section had to be unloaded before the second section could be spotted, and by then a steady rain was in progress. Coming down the runs jack wagon No. 93 lost its bull ring and slid over and hit a fence but did little damage although unloading was further delayed. Due to all these adverse factors it was necessary to call off the parade but the matinee went on only about an hour late. The show did have a fine lot at the fairgrounds in Courtland.

Rochester, N.Y. was another city that saw three railroad shows in 1937. Hagenbeck-Wallace was first in on May 31, Cole next on June 2, and Ringling-Barnum on July 3.

There was a short run to Syracuse and the town gave a good afternoon house and a turnaway at night.

A good run was expected on the 80 mile straight shot on the Lackawanna to Binghamton and an early arrival was anticipated but such was not the case as four hot boxes developed enroute which delayed the arrival until 8 a.m. The parade, however, was underway at 11:30 and the matinee was on time. Business was good at both performances.

Cole Bros. made its initial tour of New England beginning June 9 at North



Adams, Mass., first stand ever played by the show in the Old Bay State, and played a total of ten stands in the area. The show had some rather close opposition from other circuses at a few stands. At Worcester, Mass. which Cole played June 11, the Big Show was expected 12 days later on June 23. Charlie Sparks' Downie Bros. Circus was also close at several stands in Mass. Downie was at Lawrence June 16 while Cole was at Lowell only 11 miles away. Cole put up plenty of "wait paper" against the Downie show.

New London was the only stop in Connecticut with good business done at both performances. The streets were narrow and crooked which made the parade a cautious march.

The Sunday off, June 13, at Fall River, Mass. was spent in painting and fixing up various equipment and properties. Rain continued to hurt at some stands and at New Bedford, Mass. the doors opened hurriedly at 6:30 p.m. to let the crowd in out of the rain.

The stand at Keene, N.H. was a day to delight a showman's heart. There was an early arrival, beautiful weather, a grassy lot, and plenty of business.

Splendid time was made on the double run over B&M and Central Vermont railroads into Montpelier, Vt. Cole was the first large circus in that city in many years.

Floyd King was around all day in Burlington, Vt. with Canadian officials to facilitate the movement across the border that night into Canada for the initial stand at Montreal. The crossing was made with a minimum of delay and the trains arrived early in Montreal where five thousand people were at the runs and on the lot to see the show get ready for its two day engagement. The Montreal stand was truly a great one. Lou Delmore's sideshow drew 28,500 on the first day for some sort of a record. The parade route in Montreal was a long one, some 11 miles. Parade left the lot at 10 and wasn't back until 1 p.m.

Canadian stands were all good. It was the show's second visit to the Dominion, the show having played several stands in

1935 but had not made any in 1936. In 1935 the parade at Ottawa had been called off because of a late arrival but this year the show arrived on time and a big crowd witnessed its first major circus parade in a score of years.

Because of the 153 mile run into Hamilton from Belleville and fact of a 12 mile march it was deemed advisable not to parade in that city.

The show re-entered the States at Detroit in time for a big July 4 stand. The next day, July 5, at Flint, Mich. was a memorable one. Flint was the scene of a day and date with Hagenbeck-Wallace. The event, quite unusual as late as 1937 although they were fairly common in early years, created quite a stir in the trade publications. The *Billboard* sent a reporter just to cover the event and the July 17, 1937 issue had several columns telling about the day. Headlines for the article said that the town figured practically a draw as seats for both circuses were almost completely occupied at the matinee with hundreds on the ground, however the night crowds for both shows were lighter. Best estimate the reporter

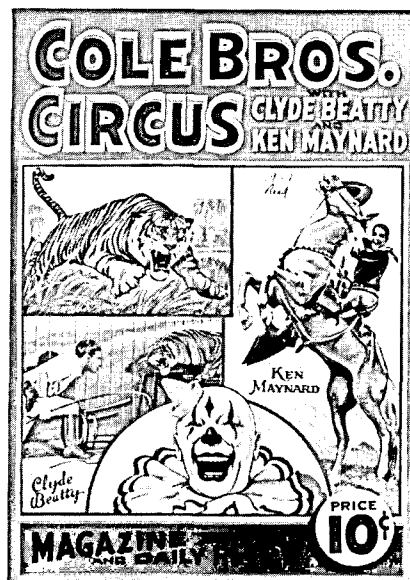
Photos No. 12 & 13 — Photos No. 12 and 13 show flat car No. 68 with 1937 stenciling and loaded with four former 12 ft. Christy cages and No. 28, hippo den. Pfening Collection

could make for the matinee was that H-W drew about six thousand and Cole about eight thousand. The town was very heavily billed. Cole made its usual parade which helped its cause somewhat. After the day at date, opposition with Hagenbeck-Wallace diminished as Cole Bros. soon headed for another trip to the West Coast while H-W started moving back and forth all over the Southland seeking out the best stands at the best time having it all to itself so far as railroad show opposition was concerned.

While Cole was at Battle Creek two stock cars were damaged by fire in the railroad yards. Show personnel formed a fire bucket brigade which held down the damage.

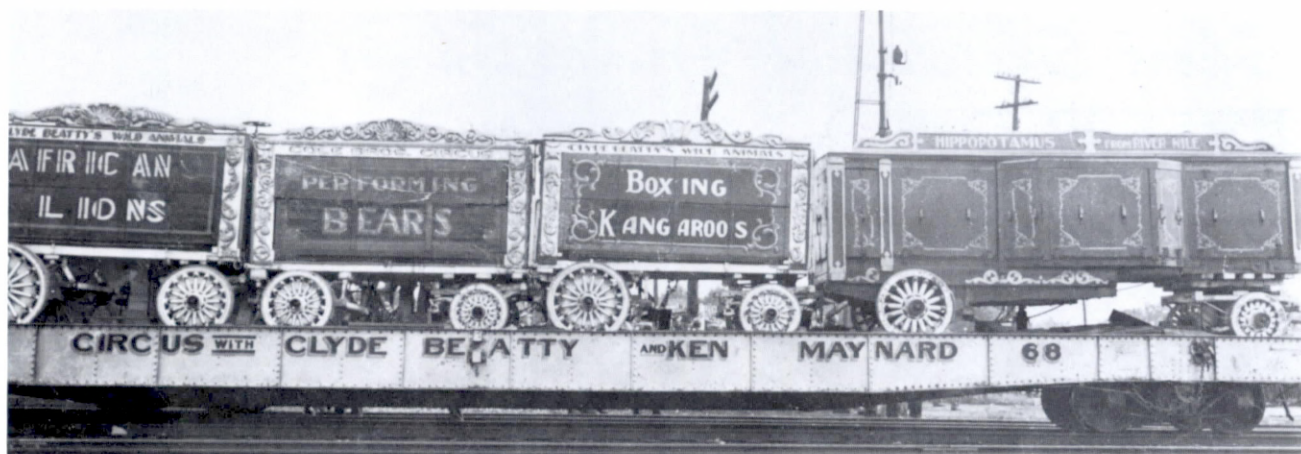
The last of the Michigan stands was at Benton Harbor on July 14 and on that day Cole Bros. received three small four year old elephants by express from New York City. They had been shipped from Rangoon, Burma, on April 20, 1937 only 31 days after being caught in the jungle so it was reported. The three punks were named Judy, Little Modoc, and Empress and became popular members of Eddie Allen's elephant herd. Gordon Potter was on the lot at Benton Harbor that day and said the express agent informed him the express charge on the elephants from New York City was a bit over \$1800 which was double the first class rate.

(To be continued next issue.)



WAGON LIST OF COLE BROS. CIRCUS SEASON OF 1937

| Old No. | New No. | Contents | Length |
|---------|---------|-------------|--------|
| 7 | 7 | Cage, Cross | 8' |
| 8 | 8 | Cage, Cross | 8' |
| 9 | 9 | Cage, Cross | 8' |
| | 10 | Cage | 15' |
| | 11 | Cage | 12' |
| | 12 | Cage | 12' |
| | 13 | Cage | 12' |
| | 14 | Cage | 12' |
| | 15 | Cage | 12' |
| | 16 | Cage | 12' |



| | | |
|----|--------------------------|-----|
| 17 | Cage | 12' |
| 18 | Cage | 12' |
| 19 | Cage | 14' |
| 20 | Cage, sea lion | 17' |
| 21 | Cage | 12' |
| 22 | Cage | 12' |
| 23 | Cage | 12' |
| 24 | Cage | 12' |
| 25 | Cage | 12' |
| 26 | Cage | 14' |
| 27 | Cage | 12' |
| 28 | Cage, hippo | 18' |
| 96 | 29 Commissary wagon | 16' |
| 30 | 30 Water wagon | 11' |
| 31 | 31 Cookhouse baggage | 19' |
| 32 | 32 Steam boiler wagon | 12' |
| | 40 Stable wagon NEW | 19' |
| 51 | 51 Light plant | 16' |
| 52 | 52 Light plant | 16' |
| | 53 Light Plant (NEW) | 17' |
| | 60 Side Show wagon | 16' |
| 61 | 61 Side Show wagon | 16' |
| 62 | 62 Columbia Tab | |
| | (Grandstand tickets) | 22' |
| 63 | 63 Red Ticket Wagon | 15' |
| 64 | 64 Frozen Custard | 15' |
| 65 | 65 Concessions | 19' |
| 66 | 66 Steam Calliope | 15' |
| 70 | 70 Palm Tree Tab | |
| | (Wardrobe) | 16' |
| 71 | 71 Asia Tab (trunks) | 19' |
| 72 | 72 America Tab (trunks) | 19' |
| 73 | 73 Clown Props Wagon | 15' |
| 74 | 74 Dogs and trappings | 20' |
| 75 | 75 Dressing room poles | |
| | and canvas | 16' |
| 76 | 76 Cat runs and props | 15' |
| 77 | 77 Steel arena wagon | 14' |
| 78 | 78 Bandstand and props | 16' |
| 79 | 79 Air calliope (statue) | 14' |
| | 80 France Tab (trunks) | 18' |
| | 82 Unafon Wagon | 10' |
| | 83 Dog Wagon NEW | 14' |
| 80 | 84 Lion and Mirror Tab | |
| | (menagerie) | 22' |
| 81 | 85 Menagerie wagon | 19' |
| 91 | 91 Big Top pole wagon | 40' |

COLE BROS. CIRCUS

CLYDE BEATTY
GREATEST WILD ANIMAL TRAINER OF ALL TIME!
AND
KEN MAYNARD
Screen's Greatest Western Star and Congress of Rough Riders.



BIGGER—BETTER—GRANDER—THAN EVER

AN ECLIPSING EPOCH IN THE WORLD'S GREATEST AMUSEMENT INSTITUTION

1080 PEOPLE—400 ARENIC STARS—812 WILD ANIMALS—IN GREAT 5 CONTINENT MENAGERIE—30 ELEPHANTS—500 HORSES—3 TRAINS OF DOUBLE LENGTH R.R. CARS—\$7,500 DAILY EXPENSE

Brimming Over with Innovations and Wondrous Surprises and a Myriad of Unprecedented Amazing Features from All Strange Lands.

AURELIA TROUPE OF THE GREATEST SAREBACK RIDERS IN THE WORLD

2 FLYING ACTS CHAMPION SOMERSAULTING AERIALISTS OF AMERICA AND CONTINENTAL EUROPE

COLOSSAL FREE STREET PARADE 11 A. M.

TWICE DAILY 2 & 8 P. M. POPULAR DOORS OPEN 1 & 7 P. M. PRICES

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----|--------------------------|------|
| 92 | 92 | Stake Driver | 13' |
| 93 | 93 | Jack Wagon | 21' |
| | 94 | Big top canvas wagon NEW | 19' |
| | 95 | Big top canvas wagon NEW | 19' |
| 94 | 96 | Chair Wagon | 17' |
| 95 | 97 | Chair Wagon | 18' |
| 98 | 98 | Chair Wagon | 16' |
| 99 | 99 | Ring Curbs Wagon | 16' |
| 97 | 100 | Rigging wagon | 16' |
| 101 | 101 | Planks wagon | 14' |
| 102 | 102 | Planks wagon | 14' |
| 103 | 103 | Planks wagon | 14' |
| 104 | 104 | Planks wagon | 14' |
| | 105 | Planks wagon NEW | 14' |
| | 106 | Stake and chain NEW | 16½' |
| 106 | 107 | Stringer wagon | 28' |
| 107 | 108 | Gilley wagon | |
| | 109 | Stringer wagon NEW | 28' |
| | 110 | Stake Driver NEW | |
| Unnumbered Equipment | | | |
| "A" | | Mack Truck | 20' |
| "B" | | Mack Truck | 19' |
| "C" | | Mack Truck | 20' |
| "D" | | Mack Truck | 20' |
| | | Mother Goose Float | 10' |
| | | Cinderella Float | 10' |
| | | Old Woman in Shoe Float | 10' |
| | | Automobile, Beatty's | 17' |
| | | Automobile, Ken | |
| | | Maynard's | 17' |
| | | Truck, gilley | 17' |
| | | Light plant, Train | 10' |
| | | Tally Ho | 10' |
| | | Chariot NEW | 6' |
| | | Chariot NEW | 6' |
| | | Phaeton | 8' |

Photos No. 17, 18 — Form panorama showing rear of the Rochester main buildings. The new rail car shops are at left and the new lean-to type shed is at right. Both were built new in the fall of 1936. Photo taken Nov. 17, 1936. Photo by Gordon Potter.



Short Sketches of Former Shows

Silver Bros. Circus 1933-39

and other Sam Dock shows.

By Joseph T. Bradbury

The late Sam Dock, who spent almost 70 years in show business and operated his own show off and on for about a half century, had perhaps his largest and best known circus in the mid 1930's when he used the title of Silver Bros. Circus and billed himself as the "grand old man of the circus." His peak years were in 1936 and 1937 during which time he used the services of Circus Magazine which provided him with a large slick magazine program listing his performance in detail and giving a brief history of his shows.

Sam Dock was born Dec. 24, 1863 at Womelsdorf, Pa. and joined out as a performer for the first time in 1883 with French & Co. Circus. Dock got his own show early in his career and opened Dock & Jordan New Oriental Show in 1888 at his home town of Womelsdorf, Pa. Next season, 1889, he operated the Dock & Sallada Big 10¢ Show also opening near Womelsdorf.

Both of his first shows were short lived and during other seasons he served with a number of circuses. Beginning in 1893 he organized a show using his own name

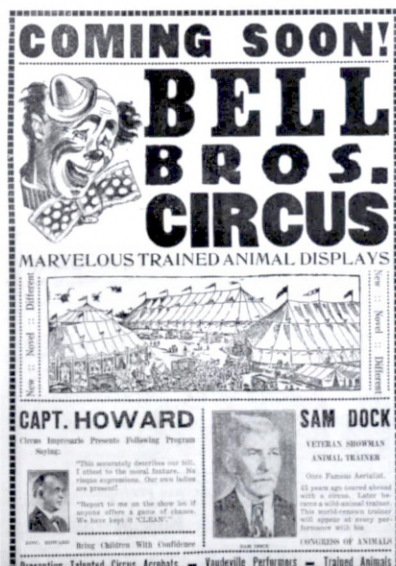


Photo No. 1 — Sideshow top of Great Keystone Shows, season of 1919. Circus Farm Collection

Paul Horsman of the Circus Farm recently came across a letter from Dock's grandson to the late Art Miller which outlined much of his grandfather's early years in show business. The Sturtevant files also aid in tracing the shows of Dock through the years.

Photo No. 2 — Bannerline of sideshow, Great Keystone Shows, 1919. Circus Farm Collection



which ran continuously through the 1903 season. Afterwards he was with Sun Bros. and other shows. All of his early shows were small wagon shows which played a limited territory.

In 1916 he framed another small wagon circus which he called Sam Dock's Great Keystone Shows which later became known as the Great Keystone State Show and finally just the Great Keystone Show. This show operated continuously through the 1927 season. During the 1920's it gradually added motor trucks and as was true of many similar shows for several years used both trucks and



Photo No. 5 — Sam Dock standing in front of Silver Bros. Circus baggage truck, Marion, N.Y., July 9, 1936. J. V. Leonard Collection

wagons. As can be surmised by the show's title it played extensively through Pennsylvania, also Virginia, West Virginia, and Maryland. Associated with Dock in operation of his shows were his wife, daughter Claire, and his son-in-law, H. R. Brison, and later his grandchildren, the "Brison brothers."

For the 1928 through 1930 seasons Dock managed the Brison Bros. Circus, a small motorized show operated by his son-in-law and grandchildren.

Despite the great depression Dock framed another small circus on the dog and pony show format using his own name which opened in May 1931. The May 16, 1931 *Billboard* tells of this event thusly: "Sam Dock opened his show at Church Road, Virginia to fair business. He has trained dogs, goats, monkeys, ponies, and clown numbers. He expects to add pit and side shows later."

The title of Sam Dock's Dog and Pony Show was used in 1932 and at the beginning of the 1933 season but it was soon changed to Silver Bros. Dog and Pony Show, evidently when other people had an interest in the show. The *Billboard* said the show had a six-piece band, new canvas, two light plants, and the performance included all trained stock. Harry Baugh, a circus fan, was manager while the H. R. Brison family had the privileges.

During the 30's Dock wintered his show at Petersburg, Va. and usually played through the same territory as had his earlier shows.

By 1934 the show had dropped the dog and pony show title and was generally known as the Silver Bros. Shows. Although the basic format was still dog

and pony a variety of circus type acts were added and as the depression eased and with Sam Dock again in complete charge the show began enlarging somewhat. Evidently it was out all winter 1934-35 which was not unusual for the smaller shows that played mainly in the sticks. The June 29, 1935 *Billboard* said that Silver Bros. Circus had been playing 107 continuous weeks without closing. A new big top, a 60 ft. round with one 40 ft. middle, had recently been delivered and Bob Russell had also gotten a new 10 x 18 stripped tent for his candy stand. The show had a pit show featuring a large monkey and an outside ball game concession. Silver Bros. had been in West Virginia for several weeks playing to good business despite rain and the show expected to be in that state for the rest of the season.

Sam Dock was an accomplished trainer of small animals such as ponies, monkeys, dogs, donkeys, and even goats. His acts were most pleasing to the small town audiences played by the show and formed the basis of the entire performance. For the 1936 season the performance listed in the Circus Magazine Program had 23 displays and included trained ponies, monkeys, riding ponies, high jumping mule, performing monkeys, riding dogs, and high diving dogs all worked by Capt. Sam Dock. Capt. Davidson presented performing goats. There were several clown numbers and regular circus type acts included Madame Kadell on balancing trapeze, Claire Brison (Dock's daughter) in a contortionist act and trapeze number; and balancing acts by the Russell Duo, and McKay. Two unusual acts ordinarily associated with sideshows

were Almed, the Hindu Marvel's Impalement Act, and Prof. Edwards Royal English Marionettes. The show claimed two rings were used for the performance.

In 1937 the Silver Bros. Shows hit its all time peak in size and quality of the performance and equipment. Motorized equipment was painted silver (aluminum) and neatly lettered in red. Earlier photos indicate trucks to have been a dark color, probably red, and lettered in silver. The May 8, 1937 *Billboard* said the show's program presented in two rings runs one hour and 40 minutes. The show had a six-piece band with a calliope and two public address systems used for bally. The sideshow had an 80 ft. bannerline and pit show one 30 ft. Show claimed 32 people with it. Although in size, number of trucks, quality of performance etc. would by present day standards put the show in the medium class, it was still considered as a small show in 1937 even among the vast number of other motorized circuses on the road that year. It played small towns and made short jumps. Motorized equipment included light semis and straight trucks.

The 1937 performance outlined in the Circus Magazine used again by the show which proclaimed it to be the 28th Annual Tour of Silver Bros. presented by Sam Dock. "The Grand Old Man of the Circus" who had put in 58 years in the business, had a total of 26 displays. Dock again worked riding monkeys, jumping mules, a January mule act, "Mr. Petersburg" the educated pony, "Patsy" a full grown trained Rhesus monkey, and dogs, including "Bobby" the high diving pooch. Other acts listed included a trapeze number by Mme. Kadell, a wire act by the Ray Troupe, balancing act with the Russell Duo, single and double traps with the Brison Trio, and a toe catch trapeze thriller by the Sonya Troupe. Also used

Photo No. 3 — Clowns in front of titled canvas covered truck, Brison Bros. Show, season of 1929. Circus Farm Collection





Photo No. 7 — Silver Bros. Shows semi on lot, probably season of 1939. Circus Farm Collection

in 1937 were the impalement act and Royal English Marionettes.

The show survived the worst of all circus seasons, 1938, and evidently had a pretty strong performance. The May 7, 1938 *Billboard* stated that Silver Bros. Circus opened April 14 at Hopewell, Va. for a three day stand. The show was owned by Sam Dock and Karl Ammon and traveled on a total of 13 cars, trucks, and trailers, and had two light plants. Ammon had served as general agent of the show several years before. The 1938 performance presented in two rings had Capt. Moyer's trained lion, Albert de Homan troupe of acrobats, E. C. Biggerstaff contortionist and single traps, and Sam Dock's trained ponies, dogs, monkeys, goats, and mules. Claire Brison, an accomplished aerialist, had a trapeze number. H. R. Brison managed the main sideshow and Ed Snyder operated a pit

Photo No. 8 — Silver Bros. Shows, cook-house truck No. 12 and cook range, probably season of 1939. Circus Farm Collection



show that had a large mandrill and peccary. The show had a six piece band.

Dock last used the title of Silver Bros. for the 1939 season. The June 17, 1939 *Billboard* said the show had been cut down from last season and was now using a public address sound system instead of a live band. The show had been out for

six weeks with the best stand so far at Paw Paw, W.Va. It was scheduled to play a few stands in Maryland and then go into Pennsylvania. Despite a rather strong performance in the 30's evidently Silver Bros. never carried an elephant.

For 1940 season Dock used the title of Bell Bros. Circus which was transported on six trucks and used a 50 ft. round with two 30's big top. His performance included trained dogs, ponies, monkeys, and clown numbers.

The Bell Bros. title was used again in 1941 and the *Billboard* said the show had four trucks, three trailers and a big top seating 500.

Dock and his partner, Bob Dickman, tried it again with Bell Bros. in 1942 but the show closed early having been out only four weeks and three days. World

Photo No. 4 — Silver Bros. Circus on lot at Marion, N.Y., July 9, 1936. Big top in center, sideshow on right, pit show and titled truck on left. J. V. Leonard Collection

War II restrictions were on and were especially difficult for small truck shows to cope with so Dock called it quits for the duration.

Sam was now well into his 80's and although he remained active as a small animal trainer he did not operate another traveling show at the war's conclusion. He did travel in 1949 with the Lee Bros. Circus, a small motorized show operated by Robert L. and Harry R. Brison and presented his well known and popular trained ponies, monkeys, and dogs.

Dock despite his advanced age still functioned as a trainer as late as 1951. He died July 1, 1953 at the age of 89.

For the reader further interested in the life and shows of the late Sam Dock I would recommend the excellent biography of Dock written by CHS Member Bob Taber which appeared in the March-April 1964 *White Tops*, copies of which are available from the editor of that publication.



THE STORY OF A TATTOOED GIRL

By Cindy Ray

Published by the author in Australia

The best known tattooed lady in America is probably Betty Broadbent, who has appeared in the side show of the Beatty Cole show, in recent years, and prior to that was for many years a regular member of the annex group on the big show.

In the last thirty to forty years there have been other well known tattooed women who displayed their "living pictures" in the side shows of various circuses, carnivals and amusement parks.

Today an attractive young Australian lass is fast becoming the best known tattooed lady in the world. Although she has not been to America her two books have found wide sale in this country.

Cindy Ray was an ordinary Australian working girl who had never ventured outside the city of Melbourne, until she became interested in tattooing. She had admired tattoos on friends and finally decided to take the step of adorning herself with a few designs. It was on June 10, 1962 that she spent eight hours having a mermaid placed on her upper right arm, a dragon on her right forearm, a band of roses on her right wrist and a dagger and roses on her left forearm. She liked these and went back to the artist a few days later and added a couple of additional adornments.

After deciding that she wished to go all the way and cover her whole body, it seemed in order to make a master plan and not wind up with a hodgepodge of unrelated pictures. This led to the difficult job of selecting a major back design. You can read the book for the rest of that story.

A few years after starting her adornment program and becoming better acquainted with the general tattooing field, she began tattooing others and set up her own studio. In due time Cindy further developed a tattooing machine and now offers a complete line of tattooing equipment. (Catalog on request.)

Although Miss Ray does not go into the full history of tattooing she does give the reader a fast tour of tattooing around the world, with references to better known tattooed people in various countries.

One of the most interesting chapters covers the tattooing of Japanese, its title, "A General Chat on Japanese Tattooing."



This reader found this part of the book very interesting. Prior to reading this book I was unaware that 1,000 men and 50 women in Japan are completely tattooed. Most, however, confine the designs to areas of their bodies that are covered by street clothes. The Japanese who are tattooed are not from the lower levels of society, but are frequently professional and business people and their wives. Husbands and wives are described and shown in retouched photographs. Many of the Japanese did not wish to have their faces identified.

Miss Ray visited a number of the more prominent tattoo artists in Japan, which she says are the leading tattoo artists of the world.

The general tone of this book elevates the art of tattooing from the Bowery level. Cindy's handling of customers with offbeat tattooing desires speaks for her concern to raise the general reputation of the art of tattooing.

Her only contact with show business has been in exhibiting herself at agricultural shows (fairs) in Australia and New Zealand. At one show the barker advertised her as "Christine Keeler's Sister." At another she was "Miss Technicolor" and at still another as the "Classy Lass with the Tattooed Chassis."

This young lady's views on tattooing are quite a contrast to the level to which tattooing has dropped in the United States. Health officials in many American

cities have closed "tattoo parlors" as being unsanitary.

The day this review was being written an article appeared in the Sunday edition of the New York Times headlined, "A.C.L.U. to defend art of Tattooing." It seems the New York Civil Liberties Union filed a brief on behalf of two New York City tattoo parlor operators who brought suit five years ago against the New York Health Department for forbidding tattooing except for medical purposes (?). The city agency had reported that some serum hepatitis cases had been traced to tattooing.

The Union's brief argued that "tattooing is a throwback to the origin of language and a form of picture writing which deserves Constitutional protection." The group suggested that if "picketing, sit-ins are protected by the First Amendment, tattooing should stand on an equal footing."

The brief, as further reported in the TIMES, stated that of more than 800 tattooed men, 91 were marked with patriotic or religious symbols; 98 with professional symbols; 344 with "fantastic, historical and miscellaneous" symbols, while only 280 had amorous and erotic tattoos.

Speaking to the general history of tattooing to fill in blanks in Cindy's book the TIMES article further quotes the brief as noting that the American born mother of Sir Winston Churchill, was tattooed as were Frederick IX of Denmark; King George V and Edward VII of England; Alfonso XII of Spain and Viscount Montgomery of Alamein.

So you can see that Miss Cindy Ray is traveling in pretty fancy circles.

The book is highly illustrated, tastefully, mostly of tattooed women in many countries. For those that have an interest in this somewhat unusual subject I recommend "The Story of A Tattooed Girl," or what this reviewer has subtitled "Cindy Ray and Her Electric Tattooing Machine."

—Fred D. Pfening, Jr.

We have made up special sale lists of books, programs, lithos, routes, photos, ads, tickets, odds 'n' ends, etc. First come, first served.

Send 10¢ coin for lists
(15¢ via air mail)

AL HALPERN

1802 Chanticleer Rd.
Anaheim, California 92804



For the 1905 Carl Hagenbeck Wild Animal Show all new equipment was built by the Bode Wagon Works of Cincinnati, Ohio. The outside sunburst wheels were used on a number of the wagons as shown here on this ticket wagon. Harold Dunn Collection.